Things New & Old,

A

MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

FOR THE LAMBS AND SHEEP OF THE FLOCK OF CHRIST.

"Feed the flock of God."—1 PETER v. 2.

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Things New and Old.

THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD.

We want the reader to open his bible and read 1 Peter ii. 1—9. In this lovely scripture he will find three words on which we shall ask him to dwell with us for a little. They are words of weight and power—words which indicate three great branches of practical christian truth—words conveying to our hearts a fact which we cannot too deeply ponder, namely, that Christianity is a living and divine reality. It is not a set of doctrines, however true; a system of ordinances, however imposing; a number of rules and regulations, however important. Christianity is far more than any or all of these things. It is a living, breathing, speaking, active, powerful reality—something to be seen in the every-day life—something to be felt in the scenes of personal, domestic history, from hour to hour—something formative and influential—a divine and heavenly power introduced into the scenes and circumstances through which we have to move, as men, women, and children, from Sunday morning till Saturday night. It does not consist in holding certain views, opinions, and principles, or in going to this place of worship or that.

Christianity is the life of Christ communicated *to* the believer—dwelling *in* him—and flowing out *from* him, in the ten thousand little details which go to make up our daily practical life. It has nothing ascetic, monas-

tic, or sanctimonious about it. It is genial, cordial, lightsome, pure, elevated, holy, heavenly, divine. Such is the Christianity of the New Testament. It is Christ dwelling in the believer, and reproduced, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the believer's daily practical career. This is Christianity—nothing else, nothing less, nothing different.

But let us turn to our three words; and may the Eternal Spirit expound and apply their deep and holy meaning to our souls!

And first, then, we have the word "living." "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up."

Here we have what we may call the foundation of christian priesthood. There is evidently an allusion here to that profoundly interesting scene in Matthew xvi. to which we must ask the reader to turn for a moment.

"When Jesus was come into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, He asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?* And they said,

* Let the reader note this title, "*Son of man.*" It is infinitely precious. It is a title indicating our Lord's rejection as the Messiah, and leading out into that wide, that universal sphere over which He is destined, in the counsels of God, to rule. It is far wider than Son of David, or Son of Abraham, and has peculiar charms for us, inasmuch as it places Him before our hearts as the lonely, outcast stranger, and yet as the One who links Himself in perfect grace with us in all our need—One whose footprints we can trace all across this dreary desert. "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." And yet it is as Son of man that He shall, by-and-by, exercise that universal dominion reserved for Him according to the eternal counsels of God. See Daniel vii.

Some say thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

There was endless speculation, simply because there was no real heart-work respecting the blessed One. Some said this, some said that; and, in result, no one cared who or what He was; and hence He turns away from all this heartless speculation, and puts the pointed question to His own, "But whom say ye that I am?" He desired to know what they thought about Him—what estimate their hearts had formed of Him. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the *living* God."

Here we have the true confession. Here lies the solid foundation of the whole edifice of the Church of God and of all true practical Christianity—"Christ the Son of the *living* God." No more dim shadows—no more powerless forms—no more lifeless ordinances—all must be permeated by this new, this divine, this heavenly life which has come into this world, and is communicated to all who believe in the name of the Son of God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I *will build* my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Now, it is evidently to this magnificent passage that the apostle Peter refers in the second chapter of his first epistle, when he says, "To whom coming, as unto a *living* stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as *living* stones [the same

words], are built up," &c. All who believe in Jesus are partakers of His risen, victorious, *rock* life. The life of Christ, the Son of the living God, flows through all His members, and through each in particular. Thus we have the *living* God, the *living* Stone, and *living* stones. It is all life together—life flowing down from a living source, through a living channel, and imparting itself to all believers, thus making them living stones.

Now, this life having been tried and tested, in every possible way, and having come forth victorious, can never again be called to pass through any process of trial, testing, or judgment whatsoever. It has passed through death and judgment. It has gone down under all the waves and billows of divine wrath, and come forth, at the other side, in resurrection, in divine glory and power—a life victorious, heavenly, and divine, beyond the reach of all the powers of darkness. There is no power of earth or hell, men or devils, that can possibly touch the life which is possessed by the very smallest and most insignificant stone in Christ's assembly. All believers are built upon the living Stone, Christ; and are thus constituted living stones He makes them like Himself, in every respect, save of course, in His incommunicable Deity. Is he a living Stone? They are living stones. Is He a precious Stone? They are precious stones. Is he a rejected Stone? They are rejected stones—rejected, disallowed of men. They are, in every respect, identified with Him. Ineffable privilege!

Here, then, we repeat, is the solid foundation of the christian priesthood—the priesthood of all believers. Before any one can offer up a spiritual sacrifice, he must come to Christ, in simple faith, and be built in

Him, as the foundation of the whole spiritual building. "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture (Is. xxviii. 16), Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth in him shall not be confounded."

How precious are these words! God Himself has laid the foundation, and that foundation is Christ, and all who simply believe in Christ—all who give Him the confidence of their hearts—all who rest satisfied with Him, are made partakers of His resurrection life, and thus made living stones.

How blessedly simple is this! We are not asked to assist in laying the foundation. We are not called upon to add the weight of a feather to it. God has laid the foundation, and all we have to do is to believe and rest thereon; and He pledges His faithful word that we shall never be confounded. The very feeblest believer in Jesus has God's own gracious assurance that he shall never be confounded—never be ashamed—never come into judgment. He is as free from all charge of guilt and every breath of condemnation as that living Rock on whom he is built.

Beloved reader, are you on this foundation? Are you built on Christ? Have you come to Him as God's living stone, and given Him the full confidence of your heart? Are you thoroughly satisfied with God's foundation? or are you seeking to add something of your own—your own works, your prayers, your ordinances, your vows and resolutions, your religious duties? If so, if you are seeking to add the smallest jot or tittle to God's Christ, you may rest assured, you will be confounded. God will not suffer such dishonour to be

offered to His tried, elect, precious chief-corner Stone. Think you that He could allow aught, no matter what, to be placed beside His beloved Son, in order to form, with Him, the foundation of His spiritual edifice? The bare thought were an impious blasphemy. No; it must be Christ alone. He is enough for God, and He may well be enough for us; and nothing is more certain than that all who reject, or neglect, turn away from, or add to, God's foundation, shall be covered with everlasting confusion.

But, having glanced at the foundation, let us look at the superstructure. This will lead us to the second of our three weighty words. "To whom coming as unto a living stone . . . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an *holy* priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

All true believers are holy priests. They are made this by spiritual birth, just as Aaron's sons were priests in virtue of their natural birth. The apostle does not say, Ye *ought to be* living stones, and, Ye ought to be holy priests. He says ye *are* such. No doubt, being such, we are called upon to act accordingly; but we must be in a position before we can discharge the duties belonging to it. We must be in a relationship before we can know the affections which flow out of it. We do not become priests by offering priestly sacrifices. But being, through grace, made priests, we are called upon to present the sacrifice. If we were to live a thousand years twice told, and spend all that time working, we could not work ourselves into the position of holy priests; but the moment we believe in Jesus—the

moment we come to Him in simple faith—the moment we give Him the full confidence of our hearts, we are born anew into the position of holy priests, and are then privileged to draw nigh and offer the priestly sacrifice. How could any one, of old, have constituted himself a son of Aaron? Impossible. But being born of Aaron, he was thereby made a member of the priestly house. We speak not now of capacity, but simply of the position. This latter was reached not by effort, but by birth.

And now, let us enquire as to the nature of the sacrifice which, as holy priests, we are privileged to offer. We are "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." So also in Hebrews xiii. 15, we read, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name."

Here, then, we have the true nature and character of that sacrifice which, as holy priests, we are to offer. It is praise—"praise to God continually." Blessed occupation! Hallowed exercise! Heavenly employment! And this is not to be an occasional thing. It is not merely at some peculiarly favoured moment, when all looks bright and smiling around us. It is not to be merely amid the glow and fervour of some specially powerful public meeting, when the current of worship flows deep, wide, and rapid. No; the word is, "praise *continually*." There is no room, no time for complaining and murmuring, fretfulness and discontent, impatience and irritability, lamenting about our surroundings, whatever these may be, complaining about the weather, finding fault with those who are associated with us

whether in public or in private, whether in the congregation, in the business, or in the family circle.

Holy priests should have no time for any of these things. They are brought nigh to God, in holy liberty, peace, and blessing. They breathe the atmosphere and walk in the sunlight of the divine presence, in the new creation, where there are no materials for a sour and discontented mind to feed upon. We may set it down as a fixed principle—an axiom—that whenever we hear any one pouring out a string of complaints about circumstances and about his neighbours, such an one is not realizing the place of holy priesthood, and, as a consequence, not exhibiting its practical fruits. A holy priest is always happy, always bright, always praising God. True, he may be tried in a thousand ways; but he brings his trials to God in communion, not to his fellow-man in complaining. "Hallelujah" is the proper utterance of the very feeblest member of the christian priesthood.

But we must now look, for a moment, at the third and last branch of our present theme. This is presented in that highly expressive word "royal." The apostle goes on to say, "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a *royal* priesthood . . . . . that ye should shew forth the virtues [see margin] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

This completes the lovely picture of the christian priesthood.* As *holy* priests, we draw nigh to God,

* The intelligent reader does not need to be told that all believers are priests; and, further, that there is no such thing as a priest upon earth save in the sense in which all true Christians are priests. The idea of a certain set of

and present the sacrifice of praise. As *royal* priests we go forth among our fellow-men, in all the details of practical daily life, to shew forth the virtues—the graces—the lovely moral features of Christ. Every movement of a royal priest should emit the fragrance of the grace of Christ.

Mark, again, the apostle does not say, "Ye *ought to be* royal priests." He says "ye *are*;" and as such we are to shew forth the virtues of Christ. Nothing else becomes a member of the royal priesthood. To be occupied with myself; to be taking counsel for my own ease, my own interest, my own enjoyment, to be seeking my own ends, and caring about my own things, is not the act of a royal priest at all. Christ never did so; and I am called to shew forth His virtues. He, blessed be His name, grants to His people, in this the time of His absence, to anticipate the day when He shall come forth as a Royal Priest, and sit upon His throne, and send forth the benign influence of His dominion to the ends of the earth. We are called to be the present expression of the kingdom of Christ—the expression of Himself.

And let none suppose that the actings of a royal priest are to be confined to the matter of *giving*. This would be a grave mistake. No doubt, a royal priest will give, and give liberally if he has it; but to limit him to the mere matter of communicating would be to rob him of some of the most precious functions of his position. The very man who penned the words on

men, calling themselves priests in contrast with the people—a certain *caste* distinguished by title and dress from the body of Christians, is not Christianity at all, but Judaism or worse. All who read the bible and bow to its authority are thoroughly clear as to these things.

which we are dwelling said on one occasion—and said it without shame, "Silver and gold have I none;" and yet at that very moment, he was acting as a royal priest, by bringing the precious virtue of the Name of Jesus to bear on the impotent man. (Acts iii.) The blessed Master Himself, we may safely affirm, never possessed a penny; but He went about doing good, and so should we, nor do we need money to do it. Indeed it very often happens that we do mischief instead of good with our silver and gold. We may take people off the ground on which God has placed them, namely, the ground of honest industry, and make them dependent upon human alms. Moreover, we may often make hypocrites and sycophants of people by our injudicious use of money.

Hence, therefore, let no one imagine that he cannot act as a royal priest without earthly riches. What riches are required to speak a kindly word—to drop the tear of sympathy—to give the soothing genial look? None whatever save the riches of God's grace—the unsearchable riches of Christ, all of which are laid open to the most obscure member of the christian priesthood. I may be in rags, without a penny in the world, and yet carry myself blessedly as a royal priest, by diffusing around me the fragrance of the grace of Christ.

But, perhaps, we cannot more suitably close these few remarks on the Christian priesthood, than by giving a very vivid illustration drawn from the inspired page—the narrative of two beloved servants of Christ who were enabled, under the most distressing circumstances, to acquit themselves as holy and royal priests.

Turn to Acts xvi. 19—34. Here we have Paul and

Silas thrust into the innermost part of the prison at Philippi, their backs covered with stripes, and their feet fast in the stocks, in the darkness of the midnight hour. What were they doing? murmuring and complaining? Ah, no. They had something better and brighter to do. Here were two really "living stones," and nothing that earth or hell could do could hinder the life that was in them expressing itself in its proper accents.

But what, we repeat, were these living stones doing? these partakers of the rock life—the victorious—resurrection life of Christ—how did they employ themselves? Well, then, in the first place, as *holy* priests they offered the sacrifice of praise to God. Yes, "at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God." How precious is this! How morally glorious! How truly refreshing! What are stripes or stocks, or prison walls, or gloomy nights, to living stones and holy priests? Nothing more than a dark background to throw out into bright and beauteous relief the living grace that is in them. Talk of circumstances! Ah! it is little any of us know of trying circumstances. Poor things that we are, the petty annoyances of daily life are often more than enough to cause us to lose our mental balance. Paul and Silas were really in trying circumstances; but they were there as living stones and holy priests.

Yes, reader, and they were there as royal priests, likewise. How does this appear? Certainly not by scattering silver and gold. It is not likely the dear men had much of these to scatter. But oh! they had what was better, even "the virtues of him who had

called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." And where do these virtues shine out? In those touching words addressed to the gaoler, "*Do thyself no harm.*" These were the accents of a *royal* priest, just as the song of praise was the voice of a *holy* priest. Thank God for both! The voices of the holy priests went directly up to the throne of God and did their work there; and the words of the royal priests went directly to the gaoler's hard heart and did their work there. God was glorified and the gaoler saved by two men rightly discharging the functions of "*the christian priesthood.*"

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL.

It is safer far to speak of the results of a brief gospel mission a year after than just at the time. So much interest is awakened, it may be in a quiet country town, by such occasional visits that nearly the whole place is aroused. Like the bursting forth of spring after a long, hard winter, all seem to have new life. But how much of the bloom will form and ripen into fruit is quite another question. Nothing could be more disappointing than to count the blossoms. A sanguine temperament, if also inexperienced, is prone to do so.

Many are greatly moved by the scenes and atmosphere of a meeting where the Holy Spirit is working, without any divine work in their own souls; and these, for the moment, have the most hopeful appearance, there is no sense of guilt to discourage; no sense of danger to alarm; and little hesitancy in saying that they do

believe. Neither are such dishonest or deceiving; they feel all they say at the time. But there is a missing link. Sin has not been felt; Christ has not been seen; the heart has not been turned to Himself under a sense of helpless ruin. They are attracted, interested, and it may be, delighted, but when the extra meetings are over, and things return to what is called "dull and dry," those who have been carried along by the general current soon cool down and return to their former habits. Who has found Christ—who is now looking to Him? is the one grand question. Christ Himself before the soul is its only power against adverse currents, against the attractions of the world and the assaults of the enemy. His presence is what keeps us holding fast "the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." "Two lads who professed to be converted last year, have gone back to the world," said one who had watched over them; "the others have gone on well; some are at the table, and one young man is now preaching the gospel." A round year is a fair test as to the varied results of the work.

Take another example. From one family, under the same roof, four of the household professed to be converted. A son and daughter are selected to illustrate our subject. All seemed equally happy, all confessing faith in Christ, all rejoicing in their new light and heavenly hope. The parents being Christians, there were great rejoicings in the family. For a short time, the four seemed to go on as they had commenced; but by-and-by, in rather less than a week, the impressions began to fade away from the mind of the son, and he soon slipped back into his former habits. When re-

minded of what he had so recently professed, and asked why he had so soon given it up, he could not tell; the feeling, he said, had gone quite away, and he had nothing before his mind: neither himself as a sinner, nor Christ as a Saviour. The name of Jesus was mentioned to him, and the blessedness of trusting in Him was earnestly pressed upon him, but there seemed no vital link between them. There was no proper sense of sin, no exercise about it, no appreciation of the Person and work of Christ. Being naturally amiable, there was no opposition, but like the morning cloud and the early dew, that which at first seemed a happy conversion, passed away. But its lessons remain; it teaches the need of dealing with the conscience, watching the direction of the eye, and ascertaining if some portion of the word of God is ruling in the heart. We see the happy contrast and the divine reality in the daughter.

About the same time that the son fell away, the daughter was allowed to be severely tested by Satan; but he found in her more than mere natural feeling, or the outward effects of the Spirit's work in others. In the middle of the night when all around was perfectly still and dark, she awoke. A strange feeling came over her as if some evil spirit were in her room; then the attack, as if a voice had distinctly said, "It's all a delusion." The preaching, the word of the Lord, the blood of Christ, her assurance of His love, the pardon of her sins, and such-like thoughts, rushed through her mind. "No," she was enabled to say to herself, "it's no delusion." And though no doubt greatly agitated by the presence of evil, she was strengthened by the presence of her Lord to meet and vanquish the enemy; not by

reasoning, not by attempting to prove that she was really converted at such a time and by such a preaching, but by the word of God. Had she attempted to reason with the enemy, she would have lost the victory. Midnight though it was—Satan's favourite hour—and terrible as the atmosphere must have been, she arose; —what holy courage!—struck a light, opened her New Testament, and her eye caught and rested on these words, "*Ye are complete in him*" (Col. ii. 10); her soul was revived, she felt perfectly calm: God says I am complete in Him; COMPLETE, God says it! Her mind was composed; the atmosphere was cleared, and Satan vanquished by the word of God and faith. She extinguished the light, and retired to rest. More than one year has passed away since these events occurred, but time has only proved their reality.

"Could I be sure," said a troubled soul to the preacher one evening, "of the very time, circumstances, and means of my conversion, I should be quite happy." Happiness resting on such a foundation, she was told, would not last long. Satan would soon beat her in argument and plunge her soul in deeper troubles than ever. Then how can I be sure, many will be ready to enquire, that I am converted? If you are now really caring to be assured that you are converted, most likely you are. Both the desire and that which satisfies it must come from God. But the word of God alone can give assurance. "Look unto me and be ye saved," are the Lord's own words. From the first moment that the eye looks to Christ as the Saviour, the soul is beyond all question saved. It may not believe it; it may be judging of its state by its feelings; it may be

miserable, even on the brink of despair; but the word of God is true notwithstanding. Our unbelief cannot make the word of God untrue, but it hinders our enjoyment of Christ and salvation.

The finest lesson that the newly awakened, or the long troubled soul can learn, is to preface all it says on spiritual subjects by affirming that "God says it." For example: God says, When we look to Jesus we are saved; God says, All that believe are justified from all things; God says, He that believeth hath everlasting life; God says, The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin; the word of God says to every penitent one at the feet of Jesus, Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace. And Jesus Himself says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." See Is. xlv. 22; Acts xiii. 38, 39; John v. 24; 1 John i. 7; Luke vii. 37—50; Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 37.

By using such terms as, 'God says,' 'the word of God says,' 'Jesus says,' an impassable barrier is placed between the soul and the enemy. Satan will tremble and flee from the weakest saint who thus uses the word of God. It is the soul's impregnable fortress; no enemy can reach it there. But should the soul have recourse to such weapons as the supposed date and means of conversion; and condescend to reason with the enemy, it could only be vanquished for the time and sorely wounded. He who said, "It is written," and again and again said, "It is written," hath left us an example in this, as in all things, that we should walk in His steps.

But alas! there are many now-a-days, who seem to

have no concern or trouble of any kind about their souls, and yet they are not unwilling to attend the preaching. But after listening to the most solemn warnings—the most affectionate entreaties, and the most earnest appeals, both as to the blessedness of heaven, and the awfulness of hell—they seem perfectly unmoved, as to their own interest in these things. So unaccountable, so heart-rending are such cases of cold indifference, that the preacher is ready to believe that the strong delusion has already set in. The Spirit of God, we know, will not leave this world while the Church is here; but He may cease to work in certain places. The very thought of such a thing makes one tremble, and should lead to the most earnest prayer to God.

But what, oh what, is my reader? A careless, a troubled, or a happy soul? If happy, pray for others; if troubled, look to Jesus, He Himself is our peace; if careless, what then? How long? Time is short: the end is near; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh; and the first thing He does when He rises up is to "shut to the door." (Luke xiii. 25.) Solemn announcement that all is hopeless for those who have refused to enter in while the door stood wide open. The agony of mind, even in this life, before they are cast into hell, will be great, at least for a time. They are represented as "standing without and knocking at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he shall answer and say unto them, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." Figurative this language no doubt is; but it reveals the utter hopelessness of all who have rejected Christ and refused to enter in before the Church was caught up and

the door shut. They are given up to strong delusion to believe a lie—they fall into the hands of Satan, and are hurried down the deep descent into the burning lake.

Oh, my dear reader! is there yet a corner of thy heart that may be impressed with these solemn realities? Lay not down this paper, I beseech thee, without serious thought as to the awful future. How canst thou bear the *thought* of hell now? How couldst thou bear its torments for ever? Oh, that word *for ever!* "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Is. xxx. 14,) thou mayest well exclaim. But when the Judge of all pronounces the sentence "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," obey it thou must. Flee from it thou canst not; struggle against it thou mayest, but in vain. A wild shriek of agony thou mayest utter, as the awful sentence "Depart from me," falls upon thine ear; but it is too late. A sigh, a groan, a penitential tear, would have moved a Father's heart, a Saviour's love, the Spirit's power—all heaven—in thy favour, when thou wast in the body; but now thy most piercing cry finds no answer. The ear of mercy is closed, the door of heaven is shut, the arm of mercy is withdrawn; the command to "depart" has been given, the gates of hell open, and the mighty angels execute the awful sentence. And, oh, forget not, that the gloomy gates, once closed behind the lost soul, will never be opened for its escape.

Delay not then another moment, my yet unsaved reader. The door of heaven stands wide open for thee now, and whosoever will may enter in. To-morrow may be too late. The greater the sinner, the clearer

the title to the Saviour; to the realms of glory; the home—the eternal happy home—of all who believe in Jesus. Once more; standing as thou still art on this earth, take another glance at the interior of hell; and another at the interior of heaven; and calmly ask thyself, Can I hesitate? No, no; Saviour and Lord; I fall at thy feet, have mercy upon me the chief of sinners. The answer thou wilt find in the word: "Thy sins which are many are forgiven . . . . . him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." See passages above; and may the Lord add His rich blessing, and to Him alone be all the praise and glory.

O Christ, what burdens bowed thy head!
Our load was laid on thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead—
To bear all ill for me.
A victim led, thy blood was shed;
Now there's no load for me.

For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee;
Thou'rt risen: my bands are all untied;
And now Thou livest in me.
The Father's face of radiant grace
Shines now in light on me.

THE TWO MITES.

(Mark xii. 41—44.)

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing."

How little did these people know whose eye was

watching them as they cast in their offerings! How little did they think of being scanned by One whose eye could penetrate the deepest depths of their hearts and read the motives that actuated them in what they were doing. It may be the ostentatious pharisee was there, displaying his wealth and making a pompous exhibition of his religiousness. Perhaps, too, the cold formalist was there, dropping, in heartless routine, his stereotyped coin into the treasury. Jesus saw it all—weighed it all—judged it all.

It is well to think on this, on every occasion in the which we are called to contribute to the Lord's cause. Well to remember, as the box or the basket is placed in my hand, that "Jesus is sitting over against the treasury." His holy eye rests, not upon the *purse*, but upon the *heart*. He weighs, not the *amount*, but the *motive*. If the heart be right, the amount will be right, according to His judgment. Where the heart beats true to His Person, the hand will be open to His cause; of this we may rest assured. All who really love Christ will count it their high and happy privilege to deny themselves in order to contribute to His cause. No doubt, it is most marvellous that He should condescend to ask us so to do. Yet He does so, and it should be our deep and ineffable joy to respond, "according as God has prospered us," ever remembering that He loveth a cheerful giver, because that is precisely what He is Himself, blessed be His holy Name!

However, the point on which we specially meant to dwell, in opening Mark xii. was the act of the poor widow. Amid the crowd of contributors who pressed forward to cast their offerings into the treasury, there

was one who particularly engaged the attention of our blessed Lord. "There came a certain *poor* widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing."

Now, that was a very small amount indeed, if looked at in a pecuniary point of view. But think of the offerer. She was a "widow"—and a "poor widow" —the very impersonation of all that is desolate, helpless, and lonely, in this world. A widow always gives us the idea of one bereft of every earthly stay and natural prop. "She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers, night and day."

True, there are many so-called widows who are not of this stamp at all—many who look aught but lonely and desolate. But these are quite abnormal. They are entirely outside the sphere of true widowhood. The Holy Ghost has furnished us with a striking photograph of this class in 1 Timothy v. 11—13.

But the poor widow at the treasury belonged to the class of true widows. She was one according to the mind of Christ. "And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even *all her living*."

Doubtless had these been the days of the public press, the princely offerings of the wealthy would have been paraded in the columns of some newspaper, with flattering allusion to their large amount, while the poor widow and her offering would have been passed over in contemptuous silence.

But our adorable Lord thought differently. The poor widow's two mites outweighed, in His balance, all the offerings put together. It is a comparatively easy thing to give tens, hundreds, and thousands from our accumulated treasures; but it is not easy to deny self of a single luxury or comfort, to say nothing of a positive necessary. But she gave all her living to the house of her God. It was this which threw her into such moral kindredness of spirit with the blessed Lord Himself. He could say, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." And she could say, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten up my living." Thus she was very near to Him. What a privilege!

But, reader, did you ever notice the shape in which she had her living? Why does the Spirit take such care to say "Two mites, which make a farthing?" Why not be content to say, "She threw in a farthing?" Ah! this would never do. It would not have brought out the real point of exquisite beauty—the true touch of whole-hearted devotedness. If she had had it all in one piece, she must have either given all or nothing. Having it in two, she had the option of keeping half for her own living. And truly most of us would judge it extraordinary devotedness to give to the Lord's cause half of all we possessed in the world. But this poor widow had *a whole heart* for God. This was the point. There was no reserve whatever. Self and its interests were wholly lost sight of, and she flung her whole living into that which to her heart represented the cause of her God. May God grant us something of this spirit!

WAITING FOR THEE, LORD.

I'm waiting for thee, Lord,
Thy beauty to see, Lord,
I'm waiting for thee,
For thy coming again.
Thou'rt gone over there, Lord,
A place to prepare, Lord;
Thy home I shall share,
At thy coming again.

Mid danger and fear, Lord,
I'm oft weary here, Lord;
The day must be near
Of thy coming again.
'Tis all sunshine there, Lord,
No sighing nor care, Lord,
But glory so fair
At thy coming again.

Whilst thou art away, Lord,
I stumble and stray, Lord;
Oh, hasten the day
Of thy coming again.
This is not my rest, Lord,
A pilgrim confest, Lord,
I wait to be blest
At thy coming again.

Our loved ones before, Lord,
Their troubles are o'er, Lord;
I'll meet them once more
At thy coming again.
The blood was the sign, Lord,
That marked them as thine, Lord,
And brightly they'll shine
At thy coming again.

E'en now let my ways, Lord,
Be bright with thy praise, Lord,
For brief are the days
Ere thy coming again.
I'm waiting for thee, Lord,
Thy beauty to see, Lord,
No triumph for me
Like thy coming again.

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "N. N." Your case commands our deepest sympathy; but we could not attempt to reply to either of your questions in the pages of a Magazine. This your own moral sense will approve. We were unable to send you a personal reply within the time you named. All we can now say to you is to exhort you to wait on God for full victory over every besetment. Persevere. Cast yourself, in utter weakness, on His strength. Use Him. Trust Him. Cling to Him. Resist the devil. Use the Name of Jesus against him.

2. "L. E. J." Matthew xx. 16, sets forth the grand principle of divine sovereignty. "The last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." God has a right to do what He will with His own. Will any one dare to question this? If so, it is plain he has never felt his true place as utterly lost. The only resource for a lost sinner is God's sovereign grace. There is no man who can stand before God on the ground of his own righteousness. All are guilty; and hence the only resource is in divine mercy; but this mercy must be sovereign. To deny God's right to be sovereign is to deny His existence. Does this touch, for a moment, the truth of man's responsibility? By no means. Both are true, and it is utterly impossible that two truths can ever clash. To attempt to reconcile divine sovereignty and human responsibility is gratuitous labour. They are reconciled already, being both set forth, with equal clearness, in the divine word. It is wonderful how simple everything becomes when we fling aside the dogmas of one-sided theology, and come like a child to holy scripture. Would that all the Lord's people could but do this!

3. "E. N. F.," Lower Edmonton. We render hearty thanks to God for the help and blessing you have received from the "Papers on the Lord's Coming." To His holy Name be all the praise! We can fully

trust Him to clear up any little difficulties which may yet remain in your mind. As to the first resurrection, you must bear in mind that those who are put to death under the Beast shall have part in it. The judgment of the nations is pre-millennial; the resurrection of the wicked is post-millennial. The period of Christ's personal reign over the earth will be a thousand years. Then all dispensations shall close; God shall be all in all. This will be the everlasting state.

4. "J. B.," Dublin. We fear there has been some mistake as to your communication. We were under the impression that the subject suggested was the Lord's Coming. In reply to your question on the subject of breaking bread alone, we have only to say that we can see no meaning in it. The Lord's Supper is, pre-eminently, an act of communion. Where is the expression of the one body? Where is there aught of fellowship? Where indeed, is there any value, at all, in a person's sitting down to break bread alone? We could only look upon such an one as an eccentric and melancholy *solitaire*—one whose mental soundness was more than questionable.

5. "J. C.," Paddington. We do not understand the notice to which you call our attention; but we should judge it to be a matter of godly order, and very necessary in such times as these, for persons visiting a place, or presenting themselves, for the first time, at the Lord's Table, to bring a letter of introduction. Would you expect to be received everywhere on your own testimony? If so, you will be disappointed. It needed a Barnabas to introduce a Saul to the assembly at Jerusalem. An assembly must have competent testimony as to a person's Christianity ere he can be received. To look for anything beyond this, is to set up conventional rules of our own which must prove to be stumblingblocks in the way of God's people as they approach the Table of their Lord. There are two things which must never be lost sight of in reference to the Lord's Table, namely, first, the *holiness* of the

Table which will not let in any who ought to be out; and secondly, the *grace* of the Table which will not keep out any who ought to be in. Finally, we have to bear in mind that cold rules and regulations are a poor substitute for love and zeal, and freshness and energy, and true pastoral care. There is a lovely simplicity in the way of the Spirit of God which we all want to cultivate more. A rule may be a very good thing in certain cases; but, if rigidly carried out, it may prove a grievous hindrance. We must confess, dear friend, we have no great liking for *red tape and routine*. We vastly prefer the holy activities of divine life and true personal devotedness. May God grant us to see very much more of these latter! "Nevertheless" we must know whom we receive at the Table of our Lord. We must remember that it is His Table, not ours; and, therefore we cannot use it to pay compliments to *our* friends, on the one hand, nor yet as a whip for the back of those who may have offended *us*, on the other. May the good Lord keep us all!

6. "J. H.," Dublin. We do not deem it for edification to discuss such a subject in our pages; indeed, dear friend, we are most fully determined not to discuss it at all.

7. "H. T. G.," Westport. We cannot but regret that the friend who visited you from a distance did not seek to lead your souls to something more edifying than discussing the question of the scripture authority for singing hymns at our meetings; and, further, we can only marvel that a number of intelligent Christians should spend a moment in the discussion of such a question. You say "the question is at first sight startling." We cannot see anything "startling" in it except it be in its bearing upon those who raise it.

But let us see what scripture says on the point. In Mark xiv. 26, we read, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." You say that "Liddell and Scott tell us that ὑμνέω might equally correctly be rendered 'to praise.'" Here is

what these learned lexicographers say—"ὑμνέω, to sing, laud, praise, sing of, tell of." And then they give the Latin "cano," which, as every schoolboy knows, signifies to sing. But you say that some learned brother has informed you that "in no one instance in scripture does the word 'sing' refer to vocal music." If singing be not vocal, what is it? When Paul and Silas *sang* praises (ὕμνουν) unto God, was not that vocal? So also, in Hebrews ii. 12, we have the words of Christ Himself, "In the midst of the assembly will I sing praise (ὑμνήσω) unto thee." Is not this vocal? In 1 Corinthians xiv. 15, we have a different word (ψαλῶ) "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding." And here the word stands in contrast with praying. Then in Revelation v. 9, we have another word (ᾄδω) "They sung a new song." The same word occurs, chapter xiv. 3; xv. 3; and in Colossians iii. 16, "singing with grace in your hearts." And in Ephesians v. 19, "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

Now here we have three different Greek words, rendered, in our most excellent Authorised Version, by *the English word 'sing;' and the question is, what idea* do these words convey to the mind? Is it not, to say the least, that of audible praise or worship, whether rendered individually or collectively? Are not "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" divinely recognized? And, if so, for what are they designed? Is it not as a vehicle for the worship of Christians? We do not see how this can be called in question by any sober person. There is no analogy between forms of prayer and hymns. The latter are divinely recognized; the former are not. This is quite sufficient for us.

"But," you say, "there is danger of our getting occupied with the tune or mere music." No doubt. And is there not danger, in teaching, preaching, and exhortation, and even in praying, of getting occupied with the language, with grammar, rhetoric, or oratory? Must we therefore give up teaching, preaching, exhortation,

and prayer? Is there no remedy for the supposed evil save reducing our meetings to a senseless and miserable silence? It certainly is a very great evil in singing to forget the subject and object of our song and become occupied with the style and effect of our singing; and, if we mistake not, it is to this very evil that the revered writer to whom you refer applies the term "iniquity." But most certainly he never meant to teach that it is iniquity to use a hymn book or sing a hymn, for he has been doing both for the last forty years, all over the world; and not only so, but he has contributed some precious hymns to help the worship of his brethren.

We have thus, dear friend, gone fully into your question; and, in taking leave of you, we would affectionately entreat of you and our beloved old Westport friends to fling aside such foolish notions; and, when you come together, instead of discussing the rightness of singing, seek to have your hearts in tune to sing. We greatly dread young Christians getting under the influence of a morbid sentimentality, transcendental notions, or a higher spirituality, falsely so called. It is sure to lead to mischief. See that you keep clear of such. Cultivate simplicity, reality, soundness of mind, and earnestness. There is no telling where we may find ourselves if we take up with every crotchet that comes in our way. Some would suggest our breaking bread alone; thus reducing the Church of God to a state of complete isolation. Others, it seems, would rob us of our hymn books, and reduce our meetings to a gloomy silence. From all such wild and foolish notions, may the good Lord deliver us! May He graciously fill our hearts with an intense desire for His glory—for the good of His beloved people, and for the progress of His cause. May these grand realities so engage all our energies and fill up our every moment, that we shall have no time or thought for the discussion of unprofitable questions.

"GOD FOR US."

How much is wrapped up in these few words,—"God for us!" They form one of those marvellous chains of three links so frequently found in scripture. We have "God" linked on to "us" by that precious little word "for." This secures everything, for time and eternity. There is not a single thing within the entire range of a creature's necessities that is not included in the brief but comprehensive sentence which forms the heading of this paper. If God be for us, then it follows, of necessity—blessed necessity—that neither our sins, nor our iniquities, nor our guilt, nor our ruined nature, nor Satan, nor the world, nor any other creature can possibly stand in the way of our present peace and our everlasting felicity and glory. God can dispose of all—has disposed of them, in such a way as to illustrate His own glory, and magnify His holy Name, throughout the wide universe, for ever and ever. All praise and adoration be to the Eternal Trinity!

It may, however, be that the reader feels disposed, at the very outset, to enquire how he is to know his place amongst the "*us*" of our precious thesis. This, truly, is a most momentous question. Our eternal weal or woe hangs upon the answer. How, then, are we to know that God is for us? In reply to this most weighty question, we shall seek, by God's grace, to furnish the reader with five substantial proofs that God is for us, in all our need, our guilt, our misery, and our danger—for us, spite of all that we are, and all that we have done—for us, although there is no

reason whatever, so far as we are concerned, why He should be for us, but every reason why He should be against us.

The first grand truth which we shall adduce is

THE GIFT OF HIS SON.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

Now, we are glad, for various reasons, to commence our series of proofs with these memorable words. In the first place, they meet a difficulty which may suggest itself to the mind of an anxious reader—a difficulty based upon the fact that the sentence culled from Romans viii. 31 evidently applies, primarily, to believers and only to such, as does the entire epistle and every one of the epistles.

But, blessed be God, no such difficulty can be started in reference to the all-embracing, and encouraging words of Him who spake as never man spake. When we have from the lips of our blessed Lord, Himself the Eternal Son of God, such words as these, "God so loved *the world*," we have no ground whatever for questioning their application to each and all who come under the comprehensive word "world." Before any one can prove that the free love of God does not apply to him, he must first prove that he does not form a part of the world, but that he belongs to some other sphere of being. If indeed, our Lord had said, "God so loved a certain portion of the world," call it what you please, then verily it would be absolutely necessary to prove that we belong to that par-

ticular portion or class, ere we could attempt to apply His words to ourselves. If He had said that God so loved the predestinated, the elect, or the called, then we must seek to know our place amongst the number of such, before we can take home to ourselves the precious assurance of the love of God, as proved by the gift of His Son.

But our Lord uses no such qualifying clause. He is addressing one who, from his earliest days, had been trained and accustomed to take a very limited view indeed of the favour and goodness of God. Nicodemus had been taught to consider that the rich tide of Jehovah's goodness, lovingkindness and tender mercy could only flow within the narrow enclosure of the Jewish system and the Jewish nation. The thought of its rolling forth to the wide wide world had never, we may safely assert, penetrated the mind of one trained amid the contracting influences of the legal system. Hence, therefore, it must have sounded passing strange in his ear, to hear "a teacher come from God" giving utterance to the great fact that God loved not merely the Jewish nation, nor yet some special portion of the human race, but "the world." No doubt, such a statement would add not a little to the amazement felt by this master in Israel at being told that he himself, with all his religious advantages, needed to be born again in order to see or enter the kingdom of God.

Do we then deny or call in question the grand truth of predestination, election, or effectual calling? God forbid. We hold these things as amongst the fundamental principles of true Christianity. We believe in the eternal counsels and purposes of our God—His

unsearchable decrees—His electing love—His sovereign mercy.

But do any or all of these things interfere, in the smallest degree, with the gracious activities of the divine nature, or the outgoings of God's love towards a lost world? In no wise. God is love. That is His blessed nature, and this nature must express itself toward all. The mistake lies in supposing that, because God has His purposes, His counsels, His decrees—because He is sovereign in His grace and mercy—because He has chosen from all eternity a people for His own praise and glory—because the names of the redeemed, all the redeemed, were written down in the book of the slain Lamb, before the foundation of the world—that therefore God cannot be said to love all mankind—to love the world—and, moreover that the glad tidings of God's full and free salvation ought not to be proclaimed in the ears of every creature under heaven.

The simple fact is that the two lines, though so perfectly distinct, are laid down with equal clearness, in the word of God; neither interferes, in the smallest degree, with the other, but both together go to make up the beauteous harmony of divine truth and to set forth the glorious unity of the divine nature.

Now, it is with the activities of the divine nature and the outgoings of divine love that the preacher of the gospel has specially to do. He is not to be cramped, crippled or confined in his blessed work, by any reference to God's secret decrees or purposes, though fully aware of the existence of such. His mission is to the world—the wide wide world. His theme is salvation—a

salvation as full as the heart of God, as permanent as the throne of God—as free as the air—free to all without any exception, limitation, or condition whatsoever. The basis of his work is the atoning death of Christ which has removed all barriers out of the way, and opened up the floodgates in order that the mighty tide of divine love may roll forth, in all its fulness, richness and blessedness, to a lost and guilty world.

And here, we may add, lies the ground of man's responsibility in reference to the gospel of God. If, indeed, it be true that God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son—if "the righteousness of God is unto all"—if it be God's gracious will that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"—if He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance—then verily is every man who hears this glorious gospel laid under the most solemn responsibility to believe it and be saved. No one can honestly and truthfully turn round and say, "I longed to be saved, but could not, because I was not one of the elect. I longed to flee from the wrath to come but was prevented by the insuperable barrier of the divine decree which irresistibly consigned me to an everlasting hell."

There is not, within the covers of the volume of God, in the entire range of His dealings with His creatures, in the aspect of His character, or in the enactments of His moral government, the very faintest shadow of a foundation for such an objection. Every man is left without excuse. God can say to all who have rejected His gospel, "I would, but ye would not." There is absolutely no such thing as reprobation

in the word of God, meaning thereby the consignment, on God's part, of any number of His creatures to everlasting damnation. Everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. xxv.) Men *will* rush into it. "Vessels of wrath" are fitted, not by God, but by themselves, "to destruction." (Rom. ix.) Everyone who gets to heaven will have to thank God for it. Everyone who finds himself in hell, will have to thank himself for it.

Furthermore, we have ever to remember that the sinner has nothing to do with God's unpublished decrees. What does he—what can he know about such? Nothing whatever. But he has to do with God's published love—His proffered mercy—His free salvation—His glorious gospel. We may fearlessly assert that so long as these glowing and glorious words shine in the record of God, "*Whosoever will* let him take of the water of life *freely*," it is impossible for any son or daughter of Adam to say, "I longed to be saved, but could not. I thirsted for the living water, but could not reach it. The well was deep and I had nothing to draw with." Ah, no! such language will never be used, such an objection will never be urged by anyone in all the ranks of the lost. When men pass into eternity they will see with awful clearness what they now affect to think is so obscure and perplexing, namely, the perfect compatibility of God's electing sovereign grace and the free offer of salvation to all—the fullest harmony between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

We fondly trust the reader sees these things, even now. It is of the very last possible importance to

maintain the balance of truth in the soul—to allow the beams of divine revelation to act, with full power, on the heart and conscience, unimpeded by the murky atmosphere of mere human theology. There is imminent danger in taking up a certain number of abstract truths and forming them into a system. We want the adjusting power of *all truth*. The growth and practical sanctification of the soul are promoted, not by some truth, but by *the* truth, in all its fulness, as embodied in the person of Christ, and set forth by the eternal Spirit in the holy scriptures. We must get rid completely of all our own preconceived notions—all merely theological views and opinions—and come like a little child, to the feet of Jesus to be taught by His Spirit, from out His holy word. Thus only shall we find rest from conflicting dogmas. Thus shall all the heavy clouds and mists of human opinion be rolled away and our enfranchised souls shall bask in the clear sunlight of a full divine revelation.

We shall now proceed with our proofs.

The second fact which we shall adduce to prove that God is for us will be found in

THE DEATH OF HIS SON.

And, for our present purpose, it is only necessary for us to take up one feature in the atoning death of Christ, but that one feature is a cardinal one. We refer to the marvellous fact set forth by the Holy Ghost in the prophet Isaiah, "It pleased Jehovah to bruise him. He hath put him to grief." Chap. liii.

Our blessed Lord might have come into this world of sin and sorrow. He might have become a man. He

might have been baptized in the Jordan—anointed by the Holy Ghost—tempted of Satan in the wilderness. He might have gone about doing good. He might have lived and laboured, wept and prayed, and, at the close, gone back to heaven again, thus leaving us involved in deeper gloom than ever. He might, like the priest or the Levite, in the parable, have come and looked upon us in our wounds and misery, passed by on the other side and returned alone to the place from whence He came.

And what if He had? what, reader, but the flames of an everlasting hell, for thee and me? For, be it well remembered, that all the living labours of the Son of God—His amazing ministry—His days of toil and His nights of prayer—His tears, His sighs, His groans —the whole of His life-work, from the manger up to, but short of, the cross, could not have blotted out one speck of guilt from a human conscience. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." No doubt, the eternal Son had to become a man that He might die; but incarnation could not cancel guilt. Indeed, the life of Christ, as a man on this earth, only proved the human race more guilty still. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin." The light that shone in His blessed ways, only revealed the moral darkness of man—of Israel—of the world. Hence, therefore, had He merely come and lived and laboured here for three-and-thirty years, and gone back to heaven, our guilt and moral darkness would have been fully proved but no atonement made. "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

This is a grand foundation-truth of Christianity, and

must be constantly affirmed, and tenaciously held. There is immense moral power in it. If it be true that all the life-labours of the Son of God—His tears, His prayers, His groans—His sighs—if all these things put together could not cancel one single speck of guilt; then, indeed, may we not lawfully enquire what possible value can there be in our works—our tears—our prayers—our religious services—our ordinances, sacraments and ceremonies—the whole range of religious activity and moral reform? Can such things avail to cancel our sins and give us a righteousness before God? The thought is perfectly monstrous. If any or all of these things could avail, then why the sacrificial, atoning death of Christ? Why that ineffable and inestimable sacrifice, if aught else would have done?

But, it will perhaps be said that, although none of these things could avail *without* the death of Christ, yet they must be added to it. For what? To make that peerless death—that precious blood—that priceless sacrifice of full avail? Is that it? Shall the rubbish of human doings, human righteousness, be flung into the scale to make the sacrifice of Christ of full avail in the judgment of God? The bare thought is positive and absolute blasphemy.

But are there not to be good works? Yes, verily; but what are they? Are they the pious doings, the religious efforts, the moral activities of unregenerate, unconverted, unbelieving nature? Nay. What then? What are the Christian's good works? They are *life-works*, not dead works. They are the precious fruits of life possessed—the life of Christ in the true believer. There is not anything beneath the canopy of

heaven which God can accept as a good work save the fruit of the grace of Christ in the believer. The very feeblest expression of the life of Christ, in the daily history of a Christian, is fragrant and precious to God. But the most splendid and gigantic labours of an unbeliever are, in God's account, but "dead works."

All this, however, is a digression from our main line, to which we must now return.

We have said that, for our present purpose, we shall merely refer to one special point in the death of Christ, and that is the fact that it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him. Herein lies the striking and soul-subduing proof that God is for us. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." He not merely *gave* Him but *bruised* Him, and that for us. That spotless, holy, perfect One—the only perfect man that ever trod this earth—the One who ever did the things which pleased His Father—whose whole life from the manger to the tree was one continued sweet odour ascending to the throne and to the heart of God—whose every movement, every word, every look, every thought was well-pleasing to God—whose one grand object, from first to last, was to glorify God and finish His work—this blessed One was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God—was nailed to the cursed tree, and there endured the righteous wrath of a sin-hating God; and all this because God was for us—even *us*.

What marvellous and matchless grace is here! The Just One bruised for the unjust—the sinless, spotless, holy Jesus, bruised by the hand of Infinite Justice in order that guilty rebels might be saved; and not only

saved but brought into the position and relationship of sons—sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

This surely is grace—rich, free, sovereign grace—grace abounding to the very chief of sinners—grace reigning, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ. Who would not trust this grace? Who can look at the cross, and doubt that God is for the sinner—for any sinner—for him—for the reader of these lines? Who would not confide in that love that shines in the cross? Who can look at the cross and not see that God willeth not the death of any sinner? Why did He not allow us to perish in our guilt—to descend into that everlasting hell which we so richly deserved because of our sins? Why give His only begotten Son? Why bruise Him on that shameful cross? Why hide His face from the only perfect Man that ever lived—that Man His own Eternal Son? Why all this, reader? Surely it was because God is for us, spite of all our guilt and sinful rebellion. Yes, blessed be His Name, He is for the poor self-destroyed, hell-deserving sinner, be he who or what he may; and each one whose eye scans these lines is now entreated to come and confide in the love that gave Jesus from the bosom and bruised Him on the cross.

Oh! beloved reader, do come, just now. Delay not! Waver not! Reason not! Listen not to Satan! Listen not to the suggestions and imaginings of your own heart; but listen to that word which assures you that God is for you, and to that love which shines forth in the gift and the death of His Son.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

A RISEN SAVIOUR'S CHALLENGE.

(Luke xxiv. 17, 38.)

THE period during which our blessed Lord lay in the tomb must needs have proved a dark and bewildering moment to many of those who looked for redemption in Israel. It would demand a calm, clear and vigorous faith to raise the heart above the heavy clouds which gathered, just then, upon the horizon of God's people; and it does not appear that many possessed such a faith at that trying moment.

We may, doubtless, look upon the two disciples who travelled together to Emmaus as illustrating the condition of many, if not all the beloved saints of God, during the three days and three nights that our beloved Lord lay in the heart of the earth. They were thoroughly bewildered, and at their wits' end. "They talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together and reasoned Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him."

Their minds were full of surrounding circumstances. All hope seemed gone. Their fondly cherished expectations were blasted, apparently. The whole scene was overcast by the dark shadow of death, and their poor hearts were sad.

But mark how the risen Saviour's challenge falls upon their drooping spirits! "And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?"

Surely this was a reasonable and a weighty question for those dear disciples—a question eminently calculated to recall them, as we say, to their senses. It was precisely what they wanted at the moment, occupied, as they were, with circumstances, instead of resting in the eternal and immutable truth of God. Scripture was clear and plain enough, had they only hearkened to its voice. But, instead of listening only to the distinct testimony of the Eternal Spirit in the word, they had allowed their minds to get thoroughly down under the action and influences of outward circumstances. Instead of standing, with firm foot, on the everlasting rock of divine revelation, they were struggling amid the billows of life's stormy ocean. In a word, they had, for the moment, fallen under the power of death, so far as their minds were concerned, and no marvel if their hearts were sad, and their communications gloomy.

And, beloved reader, does it not sometimes happen that you and I, in like manner, get down under the power of things seen and temporal, instead of living, by faith, in the light of things unseen and eternal? Yes, even we who profess to know and believe in a risen Saviour—who believe that we are dead and risen with Him—who have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Do not we, at times, sink and cower? And do we not, at such moments, stand in need of a risen Saviour's challenge? Has not that precious, loving Saviour, ofttimes, occasion to put the question to our hearts, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another?" Does it not often happen that, when we come together, or when we walk by the way,

our "communications" are anything but what they ought to be? It may be we are gloomily moping together over the depressing circumstances which surround us—the weather—the prospects of the country —the state of trade—our poor health—the difficulty of making both ends meet—anything and everything, in short, but the right thing?

Yes, and so occupied do we become with such things, that our spiritual eyes are holden, and we do not take knowledge of the blessed One who, in His tender faithful love, is at our side; and He has to challenge our vagrant hearts with His pointed and powerful question, "What manner of communications are these that ye have?"

Let us think of this. It really demands our consideration. We are all far too apt to allow our minds to fall under the power and pressure of circumstances, instead of living in the power of faith. We get occupied with our surroundings instead of dwelling upon "*things above*"—those bright and blessed realities which are ours in Christ.

And what is the result? Do we better our circumstances, or brighten our prospects by gloomily moping over them? Not in the smallest degree. What then? We simply make ourselves miserable and our communications depressing; and, worst of all, we bring sad dishonour on the cause of Christ.

Christians have very little idea of how much is involved in their temper, manner, look and deportment, in daily life. We sometimes forget that the Lord's glory is intimately bound up in our every movement, and our every expression. We all know how that, in

social life, we judge of the character of the head of a household by what we see of his children and servants. If we observed the children looking miserable and downcast, we should be disposed to pronounce their father, morose, severe, and arbitrary. If we see the servants crushed and overwrought, we consider the master hard-hearted and grinding. In short, as a rule, you can form a tolerably fair estimate of the head of a house by the tone, spirit, style and manner of the members of his household.

How earnestly, then, should we seek, as members of the household of *God*, to give a right impression of what He is by our temper, spirit, style and manner! If men of the world—those with whom we come in contact, from day to day, in the practical details of life—if they see us looking sour, morose, downcast—if they hear us giving utterance to doleful complaints about this, that, and the other—if they see us occupied about our own things—grasping, griping, and driving as hard bargains as others—if they see us grinding our servants with heavy work, low wages, and poor fare—what estimate can they form of Him whom we call our Father and our Master in heaven?

Christian reader, let us not despise and turn away from such homely words. Depend upon it there is need of such in this day of high profession. There is a vast amount of intellectual traffic in truth which leaves the conscience unreached, the heart untouched, the life unaffected. We profess to be dead and risen; but when anything occurs to touch *us*, either in our persons, in our relations, or in our interests, we very speedily shew that the old thing is not practically dead at

all, and that our belief in death and resurrection is very much of a mere theory.

May the good Lord give us grace to apply our hearts, very seriously and earnestly, to these things, that so there may be, in our daily course, a somewhat more faithful exhibition of a genuine Christianity—such an exhibition as shall glorify our own most gracious God and Father, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—and such, too, as shall afford to those who come in contact with us, a fair specimen of what pure religion really is, in its action upon the entire course and character.

If the Lord permit, we may resume this subject on a future occasion. Meanwhile, may we all realize more intensely, a risen Saviour's presence, and find therein a triumphant answer to all the dark suggestions of the enemy, the depressing reasonings of our own hearts, and the deadening influence of surrounding circumstances. God, in His infinite mercy, grant it, for Jesu's sake!

Oh! how our doubting hearts would faint at seeing
The weary way;
But step by step His hand is gently leading,
And day by day.

New blessings lie before us, and new sorrow,
Darkness and light;
But soon will reach the glorious to-morrow,
With no more night.

We trust Him—trust Him for He knows the road;
We are His care;
And all He giveth us is for our good:
We trust, nor fear.

He lets us see the daylight in His love,
To cheer our night;
We try not now to see the road, but look above
Where all is light.

"BUT I KNOW SOMETHING BETTER THAN THAT."

THE simplest incident will sometimes awaken the deepest reflection and lead the thoughts into the most blessed paths of profitable meditation; especially if a name which has a ready answer in the heart is mentioned.

"You know," said a christian lady to a girl whom she found one day ill in bed, "that Jesus died for *us*." "Yes," replied the feeble voice, "but I know something better than that, *I know He died for me*." A chord was struck in the visitor's heart which instantly vibrated to the touch of these telling words. They were friends in a moment and for ever. The dear uniting name was precious to both. They were *one* in Christ Jesus. Conversation led them to speak of the time, the means of the girl's conversion, and other circumstances familiar to the mind of the christian friend. It was a moment of real joy. Up till then the sick one was unknown as having received blessing through the preaching.

In musing on the triumphs of God's grace—on a soul sealed for eternal blessedness—we feel constrained to refer to an anecdote which we have sometimes related when preaching the gospel, and which we know the Lord has blessed to many souls. But it surely deserves a wider circulation than the sphere of our personal service. From its beautiful simplicity, its reality, and from the many thoughts it suggests, it is worthy of a permanent place in "Things New and

Old," and to be carried on its pages into all parts of the world. For the circumstances of the case we are indebted to the trustworthy pen of Dr. Winslow, and so accept the narrative as well authenticated.

During the late disastrous war between the Northern and Southern States of America, a traveller, when visiting those scenes of desolation, entered what may be called a soldier's cemetery—the place where the slain had been buried after the battle of Chickamauga. The visitor's attention was arrested by a man planting flowers on one of its lonely and humble graves. He softly drew near, feeling that the scene was hallowed by such memorials of tender love.

"Is it a son that lies buried here?" kindly enquired the stranger. "No," was the reply. "A son-in-law?" "No." "A brother?" "No." "A relation?" "No," was still the brief reply. "Whose memory, then, may I venture to ask, do you so sacredly cherish?" Pausing a moment to give vent to his emotion, he gave the following account of the young volunteer whose memory and remains were so dear to him:

"When the war broke out, I was drafted to go and join the army. No draft money was given me, and I was unable to procure a substitute, and made up my mind to go. Just as I was leaving home to report myself for duty at the conscript camp, a young man whom I had known called on me and offered to go in my stead. 'You have a large family,' he said, 'which your wife cannot support when you are gone. I am a single man, I have no one depending upon me, I will go for you.' He went. In the battle which was fought here, the dear generous young man fell dangerously

wounded. He died in the hospital, and was buried here. Ever since his death it has been my desire to visit the place of his interment, and having saved sufficient money for the purpose, I arrived yesterday, and to-day found his grave." Having concluded his touching story, he again bent over the grave, planted another flower, and, we doubt not, watered it with his tears.

The enquirer passed on, but his heart was too deeply affected with a sight, such as he had never seen before, and such as he is not likely ever to see again, to go far away. He returned to look once more on that sacred spot. But, oh! what now met his eyes! A sight that Heaven itself would look down well pleased to see. Not only was the volunteer's grave now garlanded with flowers, but a rough board was placed at the end of the turf, on which were simply carved these few, but touching, weighty words—

"HE DIED FOR ME."

Nothing more. Nothing could be added without marring its perfectness. We know not which to admire most—the grateful love, the refined taste, or the sublime sentiment, of this remarkable, poor man. It stands alone, we hesitate not to say, in its great idea, amongst all the epitaphs in the world. Surely he must have known Him who died the sinners' substitute; and the confession of faith, which has been long on record, "*Who loved me, and gave himself for me.*" There is only one great original. But, oh! what a lesson, what an example, what a rebuke, to me, to thee, my reader, to all mankind!

The volunteer died in generously taking his poor

neighbour's place and saving him from the consequences of joining the Southern army; but the blessed Lord Jesus Christ died to save us from the consequences of sin—eternal misery. Not merely from poverty and suffering in this life, but from the torments of hell for ever; where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. "If one died for all," as the scriptures plainly teach—though all will not be saved, for all men have not faith (2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6; 2 Thess. iii. 2)—who then can be guiltless if grateful honours are not shewn to His name? We are not asked to garland His tomb, or to inscribe our faith on His cross; but we are asked to believe in His love, and in His dying in our stead. And faith will always make His love and His death as personal as Paul did; "who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." Not merely, He died for *us*, or *them*, but "He died for me."

The dying girl had, as it were, raised her board; gladly would she have placed it in the window, or fastened it on the housetop, that she might tell all who passed by, "Jesus died for me;" but better far, these precious words were written on the imperishable tablets of her heart, and the offerings of her love were not a few flowers that bloom only for a day, but in songs of praise for ever. The simple yet strong faith that delights in these words, is sweet to the heart and brings us near to Himself. "Jesus died for me." He .... me; He .... me. There is no truth more plain in scripture, and none more assuring or comforting to the heart. The cross is the fullest expression of His love, and the foundation of all our blessing. Though now

in glory the Lord puts nothing between our hearts and Himself and neither does faith.

"Ascended now, in glory bright,
Life-giving Head thou art;
Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,
Thy saints and thee can part.

Then teach us, Lord, to know and own
The wond'rous mystery;
That thou in heaven with us art one,
And we are one with thee.

And soon shall come that glorious day,
When, seated on thy throne,
Thou shalt to wondering worlds display
That thou with us art one."

But alas, alas, are there not many for whom Jesus died, who cherish no gratitude for His love, no memorial of His death? yet He died willingly, voluntarily, that they might be saved from endless woe. What can the Lord Himself think, what can Heaven think, what can all enlightened minds think, of such unaccountable ingratitude? How unmitigated must the remorse of the ungrateful be in the hopeless depths of hell for ever! Not one alleviating circumstance; not one drop of water to cool the burning tongue. The darkest, the deepest, the most ignominious place in the regions of the lost must be their portion for ever.

Some little time ago a young man was introduced to a preacher after having listened to his discourse; and on being asked if he was a believer in Christ, he replied, in rather an off-hand way, "Of course I am, I have always believed in Him, we have no one else to believe in, He died on the cross for us." Without contradicting him, the preacher said, "May I ask how old you are?"

"I am seventeen," he said. "Well now, my dear young man, will you answer me another question? If you believe that Jesus died on the cross to save you from the pains of hell, have you ever really, when alone, knelt down and thanked Him for it?" "No," was his honest reply. "Then you must be a stranger to Him: He will at last say, to all such, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' Sleep not, young man, for your soul's sake, for Jesus' sake, for heaven's sake, for hell's sake, sleep not until you have considered your ways and turned to the Lord. Only think, you have reached the age of seventeen and never thanked the Lord Jesus for all He has done that you might be pardoned and saved for ever." But are there not many, who are more than seventeen, and who are chargeable with the same neglect of the Lord Jesus? Will not the gratitude of the Southerner, his flowers, his tears, his board, his inscription, rise in judgment against all such, cover them with everlasting shame, and aggravate their everlasting condemnation?

Let the love of Jesus then, my dear reader, who died for the chief of sinners—and more thou canst not be—move thy heart to grateful love and admiration of that blessed One. He died for thee—more cannot be said. If this great fact move not thy heart, what will? He finished the work of man's redemption on the cross; He now rests on the throne in glory, waiting for thee. He will hear thy prayers, see thy tears, rejoice in thy faith, and listen to thy praise and thanksgiving; unlike the young volunteer who heard not the sighs, saw not the tears of him for whom he died. He knew not that flowers bloomed on his lonely grave, or that

his neighbourly love was now made known in artless eloquence to the universe.

And wilt thou, my dear reader, allow a devotion of heart around that silent grave, to excel thine to a risen Saviour, who bids thee come to Him and dwell with Him for ever? God forbid! Awake, awake, from thy long sleep of sin; arise, arise, to the consciousness that Jesus died that thou mightest live—live for ever. Let thy gratitude be proportionate to the greatness of the sacrifice, thy faith proportionate to the dignity of Him who died, thy zeal to the deliverance accomplished and the salvation secured. "Could I grave these blessed words, 'He died for me,'" said one in great ecstasy one evening, "on every tree that grows, on every leaf that quivers, on the face of all rocks; and could I herald them forth on the wings of the wind, I would tell the vast universe of God that 'Jesus died for me'—that I live through His death, and shall reign with Him in glory for ever." This was faith, love, gratitude, and zeal for the Lord's glory. Go thou, my dear friend, learn of Jesus and do likewise.

SUNLIGHT IN THE HEART.

There is sunlight on the hill-top,
  There is sunlight on the sea;
And the golden beams are sleeping
  On the soft and verdant lea.
But a richer light is filling
  All the chambers of my heart,
For THOU art there, my Saviour,
  And 'tis SUNLIGHT where *thou* art.

Thou hast whisper'd Thy forgiveness
In the secret of my soul:
"Be of good comfort, daughter,
For I have made thee whole."
The "fowler's snare is broken,"
And loosed my captive wing;
And shall the bird be silent
Which thou hast taught to sing?

In the dust I leave my sackcloth,
As a thing of other days;
For "thou girdest me with gladness,
And thou robest me with praise."
And to that home of glory,
Thy blood hath won for me,
In heart and mind ascending,
My spirit follows thee.

Choose thou for me my portion,
My bitter and my sweet;
The cup thy hand doth mix me
I will drink it at thy feet;
While I'm waiting for that moment,
The brightest and the best,
When thou shalt stoop to lift me
From thy footstool to Thy breast.

Lord Jesus! Thou hast bought me,
And my life, my all is Thine;
Let the lamp thy love hath lighted
To thy praise and glory shine—
A beacon, 'mid the darkness,
Pointing upward where *thou* art;
The smile of whose forgiveness
Is the SUNLIGHT of my heart!

CORRESPONDENCE.

8. "J. F.," Bo'ness. Hebrews xii. 7 teaches us, most surely, to leave ourselves wholly in God's hands, whatever be the character or measure of the chastening. It helps most blessedly to this end to bear in mind that God is dealing with us as sons. There is nothing penal in His chastening. All is in perfect love, unerring wisdom, and infallible faithfulness, and the purpose of God in it all is to make us partakers of His holiness. Hence, therefore, it would be a serious mistake for us to seek, in any wise, to take ourselves out of our Father's hand. We should rather desire that the chastening might produce the proper result, and that God might be fully glorified thereby. Restless efforts to get out of trial prove that we are not walking with God, and that we do not see His hand or His end in the matter. Moreover, we shall find that all such efforts only increase our trouble, while they rob us of the sweet consciousness that all we are passing through comes direct from the hand of our loving Father.

9. "Iota," Dublin. It is very necessary to distinguish between the land as given by Jehovah, and taken by Israel. Jehovah gave the whole, and gave it for ever. Israel took but a part and that for a time. This will, in measure, explain the difference between Joshua and Judges. In the former, the faithfulness of God shines out in brightest lustre; in the latter, the failure of man is signally apparent. But, by and bye, all will be made good, under the hand of the true Joshua; for all the promises of God are yea and amen, in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us. Not a single jot or tittle of God's promises can ever fail. But then besides the promises, we have the government of God as displayed in His dealings with Israel; and we must ever remember that God's governmental dealings can never, for a moment, touch the eternal stability of His grace. It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between grace and government. You will constantly

find the adherents of one school of doctrine arguing from the enactments of the divine government, and using them to impugn the doctrines of grace. And, on the other hand, the adherents of the opposite school use the doctrines of grace in such a way as to ignore God's ways in government. Hence the need, the urgent need, of laying aside all schools of doctrine and coming like a little child to sit at the feet of Jesus and be taught of Him.

In your third query you quote Matthew xvi. 19 and John xx. 23. Now, the former is specific; the latter is general. That applies only to Peter; this to all disciples as such. When the assembly at Corinth put away the wicked person, it was a retaining of sin. When they received Him back, it was a remitting of sin. Both acts were ratified or bound in heaven. In neither passage is it a question of eternal salvation. Matthew xvi. 19 is the administration of the kingdom; John xx. 23, the discipline of the assembly. Popery has falsely arrogated the former; Protestantism has not known how to use the latter. Christians should seek to understand both.

10. "C.," Holford Square. See the latter part of our reply to "Iota."

11. "A servant of the Church." You must distinguish between Genesis xxv. 23 and Malachi i. 2, 3. The former was uttered before the children were born; the latter, hundreds of years afterwards, when the conduct and character of each were fully manifested. It is important to mark this difference. And not only so, but we must seek to understand the object of the Holy Ghost in His use of the above scriptures in Romans ix. The apostle is establishing the absolute sovereignty of divine mercy—God's right to do as He will. He proves to Israel that to argue against divine sovereignty is to surrender all their privileges. For how did they get in? Was it by birth? No; for on that ground Ishmael and Esau had the precedence. Was it by works? No;

for they made the golden calf. How then? Simply by God's sovereign mercy. Well, then, if God is sovereign He can have mercy upon whom He will; and blessed be His Name, that opens the door for us poor Gentiles.

12. "J. B.," Dudley. We most fully enter into all you say, and deeply sympathize with you in the circumstances which surround you. Wait on the Lord. He is our only, our sure resource. We question if your way is open for the matter to which you refer. But the Lord will order and provide in His own time and way. Oh! beloved, what a reality to have to do with the living God. May He comfort and sustain your heart by His own blessed presence and ministry.

13. "T. R.," Stratford-on-Avon. Unless in the case of children, we should judge it contrary to the good order which ought to mark the assembly.

14. "An Enquirer." We do not see how any one who desires to be subject to scripture can fail to perceive that the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, gets a place quite distinct in the New Testament. The risen Lord met His disciples, again and again, on that day. Thomas had to wait till that day to have his unbelief corrected. The early disciples came together to break bread on that day. (Acts xx. 7.) The Corinthians were instructed to lay by their contributions for the collection on that day. The apostle John was in the Spirit on that day. Thus we have a body of evidence quite sufficient to carry conviction to any mind that bows to scripture. The Lord's day is not, therefore, to be treated as an ordinary day, but if possible to be loved and honoured and prized more than the sabbath itself. True, there is no absolute command—no legal enactment; but that, in no wise, takes away from the privilege of the Lord's day, but rather enhances it. Hence, therefore, dear friend, we should positively refuse to engage in the business of buying and selling on the Lord's day—even though the matter in question be a book or a tract. Wherein, we may ask, lies the difference

between a book shop and a baker's shop? Where will you draw the line? No doubt, a person might give a friend a number of tracts for distribution, on the Lord's day. And, moreover, an emergency might occur in which grace would readily waive a point; we must not be ultra, rigid, or strait laced. But, allowing all this, we should most decidedly refuse to *sell* books or tracts or anything else on the Lord's day; and we are extremely sorry to think that any Christian should ask you to do so. Why not procure such things during the week? Are not six days enough for traffic and trade? Why intrude on the hallowed retirement of the Lord's day? Surely we ought to be only too thankful that our God has most graciously—so far as we in these favoured realms are concerned—wrested the Lord's day from the grasp of a covetous world, and conferred it as a precious boon upon us to be devoted to His worship and service. What should we do if we had not that blessed break in the dull and depressing routine of buying and selling? What rust would creep over our souls! How secularized we should become!

"But," it may be said, "books and tracts are not like ordinary merchandise. They are immediately connected with the Lord's work." Well, then, being so, that is all the more cogent reason why we should not, by the sale of them, traverse the principles of the Lord's day. It would be a sad affair indeed to find the Lord's people carrying on their buying and selling on the Lord's day, when worldly people are prevented by the Government of the country from pursuing theirs. Let us beware that we use not our liberty in an evil way, thus laying a stumblingblock in the way of the weak—giving occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully, and our brethren to speak equivocally of us—and opening the door for carelessness, worldliness, looseness and hardness of heart. It is a good thing to honour the Lord's day. We have never seen any good come of the opposite—never.

"GOD FOR US."

PART II.

In pursuing what we may truly call the golden chain of evidence in proof that God is for us, we have dwelt upon the two precious facts of the gift and the death of His Son. We have travelled from the bosom to the cross, along that mysterious and marvellous path which is marked by the footprints of divine and everlasting love. We have seen the blessed One not only giving His only begotten Son from His bosom, but actually bruising Him for us—making His spotless soul an offering for sin—bringing Him down into the dust of death—making Him to be sin for us—judging Him in our stead—thus affording the most unanswerable evidence of the fact that He is for us, that His heart is toward us, that He earnestly desires our salvation, seeing that He hath not withheld His Son, His only Son from us, but delivered Him up for us all.

We shall now proceed to our third proof, which is furnished by

THE RAISING OF HIS SON.

And in speaking of the glorious fact of resurrection, we must confine ourselves to the one point therein, namely, the proof which it furnishes of God's being friendly to us. A passage or two of scripture will suffice to unfold and establish this special point.

In Romans iv., the inspired apostle introduces God to our hearts as the One who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He is speaking of Abraham who, He tells us, "against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that

which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that"—what? That gave His Son? Nay. That bruised His Son upon the cross? Nay. What then? "That raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead"—the very same "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Anxious reader, weigh this great fact. What was it that brought the precious Saviour to the cross? What brought Him down to the dust of death? Was it not our offences? Truly so. "He was delivered for our offences." He was nailed to the cursed tree for us. He represented us on the cross. He was our Substitute, in all the full value and deep significance of that word. He took our place and was treated, in every respect, as we deserved to be treated. The hand of infinite justice dealt with our sins—all our sins, at the cross. Jesus made Himself responsible for all our offences, our iniquities, our transgressions, our liabilities, all that was or ever could be against us—He, blessed be His peerless and adorable name!—made Himself answerable for all, and died in our stead, under the full weight of our sins. He died, the just for the unjust.

Where is He now? The heart bounds with ineffable joy and holy triumph at the thought of the answer. Where is the blessed One who hung on yonder cross, and lay in yonder tomb? He is at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour. Who set Him there? Who put the crown upon His blessed brow? God Himself. The One who gave Him, and the One who bruised Him is the One who raised Him, and it is in Him we are to believe if we are to be counted righteous. This is the special point before the apostle's mind. Righteousness shall be imputed to us if we believe on God as the One who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Mark the vital link. Seize the all-important connexion. The selfsame One who hung upon the cross, charged with all our offences, is now on the throne without them. How did He get there? Was it in virtue of His eternal Godhead? No: for on that ground He was always there. He was God over all blessed for ever. Was it in virtue of His eternal Sonship? Nay; for He was ever there on that ground also.*

Hence, therefore, it could, in no wise, meet our need as guilty sinners, charged with innumerable offences, to be told that the eternal Son of the Father had taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, inasmuch as that place ever belonged to Him—yea, the very deepest and tenderest place in the bosom of the Father.

* We rejoice in every opportunity for the setting forth of Christ's eternal Sonship. We hold it to be an integral and essentially necessary part of the christian faith.

But, further, we may enquire, was it as the spotless, sinless, perfect Man that our adorable Lord took His seat on the throne? Nay; as such, He could, at any moment, between the manger and the cross, have taken His place there.

To what conclusion, then, are we absolutely shut up, in this matter? To that most precious, that tranquillizing conclusion, that the selfsame One who was delivered for our offences, bruised for our iniquities, judged in our stead, is now in heaven; that the One who represented us on the cross, is now on the throne; that the One who stood charged with all our guilt, is now crowned with glory and honour; that, so perfectly, so absolutely and completely has He disposed of the entire question of our sins, that infinite justice has raised Him from the dead, and placed a diadem of glory upon His sacred brow.

Reader, dost thou understand this? Dost thou see its bearing upon thyself? Dost thou believe in the One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? Dost thou see that, in so doing, He has declared Himself friendly to thee? And dost thou believe that, in raising up Jesus, He set forth His infinite satisfaction in the great work of atonement, and furnished thee with a receipt in full for all thy debts—a receipt for the "ten thousand talents."

Here lies the gist, marrow, and substance of this magnificent argument of Romans iv. If the man who was delivered for our offences is now in heaven, and in heaven, too, by the hand and act of God himself; then, most surely, our offences are all gone, and we stand justified from all things, as free from every charge of guilt, and every breath of condemnation, as the blessed

One Himself. It cannot possibly be otherwise, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It is utterly impossible for a charge to be brought against the believer in the God of resurrection, for the simplest of all reasons that the One whom He raised was the One whom He bruised for the believer's sins. Why did He raise Him? Because the sins for which He bruised Him were all put away, and put away for ever. The Lord Jesus *having undertaken our cause, and made Himself answerable for us, in every way,* could not be where He now is, if a single jot or tittle of our guilt remained. But, on the other hand, being where He now is, and being there by God's own act, it is impossible—utterly impossible—for any question to be raised as to the full and complete justification and perfect righteousness of the soul that believes in Him. Thus, the moment that any one believes in God, in the special character of the raiser of Jesus, he is counted perfectly righteous before Him. This is most marvellous, but divinely and eternally true. May the reader feel its power, sweetness, and tranquillizing virtue! Yea, may the eternal Spirit give him the blessed sense of it, deep down in his heart! Then, indeed shall he have perfect peace in his soul; then, too, shall he understand how that, in raising, as well as in bruising and giving His Son, God has declared and proved Himself to be for us.

We had intended to bring under the special notice of the reader Hebrews xiii. 20; but we must allow him to dwell upon that lovely passage for himself, while we proceed to exhibit our fourth proof that God is for us, which will be found in

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Here, too, we must confine ourselves to one point in that most glorious event, and that is the form in which that august witness, the eternal Spirit, descended.

Let the reader turn to the second chapter of the Acts. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them *cloven tongues*, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with *other tongues*, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, *out of every nation under heaven*. Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak *in his own language*. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we *every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?* Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak *in our tongues* the wonderful works of God."

Here then we mark one special fact—a fact of deepest interest—three times referred to in the foregoing quotation. It is this, the Holy Ghost came down to speak to every man "in his own dialect"—not the

dialect in which he was *educated* merely, but "*in which he was born*"—the very dialect in which his mother first whispered into his infant ears, the sweet and tender accents of a mother's love. Such was the medium, such the vehicle which the divine Messenger adopted for the blessed purpose of making known to man that God was for us. He did not speak to the Hebrew in Greek, or to the Greek in Latin. He spoke to each one in the language which he understood, in the plain vernacular—the mother tongue. If there was any peculiarity in that mother tongue, any idiom, any provincialism in the dialect of each, the blessed Spirit would make use of it for the purpose of reaching the heart with the sweet story of grace.

Contrast with this the giving of the law from Mount Sinai. There Jehovah confined Himself absolutely to one language. If persons had been gathered there "from every nation under heaven," they would not have understood a single syllable. The law—the ten words—the record of *man's duty* to God and to his neighbour was sedulously wrapped up in one tongue. But when "*the wonderful works of God*" were to be published—when the blessed story of love was to be told out—when the heart of God towards poor guilty sinners was to be revealed, was one language enough? No! "Every nation under heaven" must hear, and hear, too, in their own very mother tongue.

Reader, is not this a telling fact? It will perhaps be said that those who heard Peter and the rest on the of day Pentecost, were Jews. Well, that in no wise robs our fact of its charm, its sweetness, and its power. Our fact is that when the eternal Spirit descended from

heaven, to tell of the resurrection of Christ, to tell of accomplished redemption—to publish the glad tidings of salvation—to preach repentance and remission of sins—He did not confine Himself to one language, but spoke in every dialect under heaven!

And why? Because He desired to make man understand what He had to say to him—He desired to reach his heart with the sweet tidings of redeeming love—the soul-stirring message of full remission of sins. When the law was to be given—when Jehovah had to speak to man about his duty—when He had to address him in such terms as, "Thou shalt do this, and thou shalt not do that," He confined Himself to one solitary language. But when He would unfold the precious secret of His love—when He would prove to man that He was for him, He, blessed for ever be His name, took care to speak in every language under heaven, so that every man might hear, in his own dialect wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God.*

Thus, then, in our series of proofs—our golden chain of evidence, we have travelled from the bosom of God to the cross of Christ, and from that precious cross back to the throne—we have marked the giving, the bruising, and the raising of the Son; we have seen the very heart of God told out in deep and marvellous love, and tender compassion toward guilty perishing sinners.

* The reader will note with interest a fact alluded to elsewhere, that in Genesis xi. divers tongues were given as a judgment upon man's pride. In Acts ii. divers tongues were given in grace to meet man's need. And in Revelation vii. the various tongues are all found united in one song of praise to God and to the Lamb. Such are some of the wonderful works of God. May we praise Him with all our ransomed powers! May our hearts adore Him!

Moreover, we have marked the descent of the eternal Spirit, from the throne of God—His mission to this world to announce to every creature under heaven the glad tidings of a full, free, and everlasting salvation, through the blood of the Lamb, and to announce these tidings not in an unknown tongue, but in the very tongue wherein each was born.

What more remains? Is there yet another link to be added to the chain? Yes; there is

THE POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

It may perhaps be said that our fifth proof is involved in our fourth, inasmuch as the fact of my possessing a copy of the bible in my mother tongue is, in reality, the Holy Ghost speaking to me in the language in which I was born.

True; but still, so far as the reader is concerned, the fact that God has put into his hand, or within his reach the sacred volume—the inestimable boon, the holy scriptures—is an additional proof that He is for him. For why were we not left in ignorance and total darkness? Why was the divine book put into our hands? Why, each one may say, for himself and herself, was I thus favoured? Why was I not left to live and die in heathen blindness? Why was the heavenly lamp allowed to cast its precious beams on me—even me?

Ah! beloved reader, the answer is, "Because God is for thee." Yes, for thee, notwithstanding all thy many sins—for thee, spite of all thy forgetfulness, ingratitude and rebellion—for thee, although as thou very well knowest, thou canst not shew a single reason why He

should not be against thee. He gave His Son from His bosom, bruised Him on the cross, raised Him from the dead, sent down the Holy Ghost, put into your very hands His blessed book, all to shew you that He is for you, that His heart is toward you, that He earnestly desires your salvation.

And mark, we pray thee, thou canst not say, nor wilt thou ever dare to say, "I could not understand the bible; it was beyond me; it was full of abstruse mysteries which I could not fathom; of difficulties which I could not solve; of discrepancies which I could not reconcile. And when I turned to those who professed to be Christians, I found them split up into almost innumerable sects, and divided into almost endless schools of doctrine. And, not only so, but I saw such utter hollowness, such gross inconsistency, such flagrant contradiction between profession and practice, that I was forced to abandon the whole subject of religion with a mingled feeling of perplexity, contempt, and disgust."

These objections will not stand in the judgment, nor keep thee out of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Remember this. Yes, ponder it deeply. Let not the devil, let not thine own heart deceive thee. What does Abraham say to the rich man, in Luke xvi.? "They have Moses and the prophets, *let them hear them.*" Why does the rich man not reply, "They cannot understand them?" He dare not.

No, reader; a child can understand the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. There is not one beneath the canopy of God's heaven, who possesses a

copy of the holy scriptures, who is not solemnly responsible before God for the use he makes of them. If professing Christians were split up into ten thousand times as many sects as they are; if they were ten thousand times as inconsistent as they are; if schools and doctors of divinity were ten thousand times more conflicting than they are—still the word to each possessor of the bible is, "You have Moses and the prophets, and the New Testament, hear them."

Oh! that we could persuade the unconverted, the unawakened, the unbelieving reader to think of these things, to think of them now, to ponder them, in the very hidden depths of his moral being, to give them his heart's undivided attention, ere it be too late. We contemplate, with ever-deepening horror, the condition of a lost soul in hell—of one opening his eyes, in that place of endless torment, to the tremendous fact that God is against him and against him for ever; that all hope is gone; that nothing can ever bridge the chasm that separates the region of the lost from the heaven of the redeemed; that "there is a great gulf *fixed*."

We cannot proceed. The thought is really overpowering. The heart is crushed by the appalling contemplation. Dear, dear reader, do let us entreat of thee, ere we lay down the pen, to turn, this very hour, to a dear loving Saviour who stands with open arms and open bosom to receive all who come to Him, and who assures thee that "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Do come and trust in God's faithful word and Christ's finished work.

Here lies the precious secret of the whole matter. Look away from self, look straight to Jesus, confide

simply in Him, and in what He has done for thee on the cross, and all thy sins shall be blotted out, divine righteousness shall be thine, eternal life, sonship, an indwelling Spirit, an all-prevailing Advocate, a bright home in the heavens, a portion in Christ's eternal glory—yes, reader, if thou wilt but believe in Jesus all shall be thine—Himself the best of all.

May the Holy Ghost lead thee, this moment, to the feet of Jesus, and enable thee to cry out in holy triumph, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" God grant it for Jesus Christ's sake!

A RISEN SAVIOUR'S CHALLENGE.

(Luke xxiv. 17, 38.)

PART II.

It is impossible to read this charming section of inspiration and not be struck with what we may venture to call the rallying power of a risen Saviour's voice and presence. We see the dear disciples scattered hither and thither, in doubt and perplexity, fear and despondency—some running to the sepulchre; some coming from it; some going to Emmaus, and some crowded together at Jerusalem, in various states and conditions.

But the voice and realized presence of Jesus rallied, reassured, and encouraged them all, and brought all together around His own blessed Person, in worship, love, and praise. There was an indescribable power in His presence to meet every condition of heart and mind. Thus it was; thus it is; thus it ever must be, blessed and praised be His matchless Name! There is

power in the presence of a risen Saviour to solve our difficulties, remove our perplexities, calm our fears, ease our burdens, dry our tears, meet our every need, tranquillize our minds, and satisfy every craving of our hearts.

"Jesus, thou art enough,
The mind and heart to fill,
Thy life—to calm the anxious soul,
Thy love—its fears dispel."

The two disciples going to Emmaus proved something of this, if we are to judge from their own glowing words to one another, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Yes, here lay the deep and precious secret: "*He* talked with us,"—and "*He* opened to us the scriptures?" What seraphic moments!—what high communion! what loving ministry! A risen Saviour rallying their hearts by His marvellous words, and mighty exposition of the scriptures.

What was the effect—what the necessary result? The two travellers instantly returned to Jerusalem to seek their brethren. It could not be otherwise. If we lose sight of a risen Saviour we are sure to get away from our brethren, sure to get occupied with our own things—to pursue our own way—to get into coldness, deadness, darkness, and selfishness. But, on the other hand, the moment we get really into the presence of Christ—when we hear His voice, and feel the sweetness and power of His love—when our hearts are brought under the mighty moral influence of His most precious loving ministry, then we are led out, in true affection and interest, after all our brethren, and in earnest de-

sire to find our place in their midst in order that we may communicate to them the deep joy that is filling our own souls. We may lay it down as a fixed principle—a spiritual axiom—that it is utterly impossible to breathe the atmosphere of a risen Saviour's presence and remain in an isolated, independent, or fragmentary condition. The necessary effect of His dear presence is to melt the heart and cause it to flow out in streams of tender affection toward all that belong to Him.

But let us pursue our chapter.

"And they rose up the same hour of the night"—thus proving they had but little business at Emmaus, "and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit."

They, too, needed a risen Saviour's challenge to bring them to their senses—to calm their fears, and raise their drooping spirits. They needed to realize the power of His presence, as the risen One. They had just declared to their two brethren from Emmaus that "The Lord is risen indeed;" but yet when their risen Lord appeared to them, they did not know Him, and He had to challenge their hearts with His stirring words, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see: for a spirit

hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb, and he took it, and did eat before them."

What tender love! What gracious condescension to their weakness and need! What compassionate entrance into all their feelings, spite of their folly and unbelief! Gracious Saviour! Who would not love thee? Who would not trust thee? May the whole heart be absorbed with thee, may the whole life be cordially devoted to thy blessed service! May thy cause command all our energies! May all we have and all we love be laid on thine altar as a reasonable service! May the eternal Spirit work in us for the accomplishment of these grand and longed-for objects!

But, ere closing this brief article, there is one point of special interest and value to which we must call the attention of the christian reader, and that is, the way in which the risen Saviour puts honour upon the written word. He rebuked the two travellers for their slowness of heart to believe the scriptures. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

So also in His interview with the eleven and the rest at Jerusalem. No sooner had He satisfied them as to His identity, than He sought to conduct their souls to the same divine authority—the holy scriptures. "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all

things must be fulfilled, *which were written* in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand *the scriptures*, and said unto them, *Thus it is written*, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

All this is of the deepest possible importance, at the present moment. We feel persuaded that professing Christians, everywhere, need to have their hearts stirred up in reference to the paramount claims of the word of God, its absolute authority over the conscience, its formative power, its complete sway over the entire course, character, and conduct.

It is to be feared, greatly feared, that holy scripture is fast losing its divine place in the hearts of those who profess to take it as the divine rule of faith and morals. We have often heard that watchword sounded in our ears, "The bible, and the bible alone is the religion of Protestants." Alas! alas! if this motto were ever really true, we fear that its truth, at this solemn moment, is more than questionable. Very few, comparatively, even of those who occupy the very highest platform of profession, seem to admit, and still fewer actually acknowledge practically, that *in all things*, whether of faith or morals—in all the practical details of life, in the Church, in the family, in the business, and in our private walk from day to day—we are to be governed absolutely by that commanding, that mighty, that morally glorious sentence, "It is written"—a sen-

tence enhanced exceedingly in value, and heightened in its moral glory by the telling fact that it was used thrice by our adorable Lord, at the opening of His public career, in His conflict with the adversary; and sounded in the ears of His loved ones just as He was about to ascend into the heavens.

Yes, dearly beloved christian reader, "It is written" was a favourite sentence with our divine Master and Lord. He ever obeyed the word. He yielded a hearty and unqualified submission to its holy authority in all things. He lived on it and by it, from first to last. He walked according to it, and never acted without it. He did not reason or question, imply or infer, He did not add or diminish or qualify in any one way—*He obeyed.* Yes; He the eternal Son of the Father—Himself God over all blessed for ever—having become a man, lived on the holy scriptures, and walked by their rule continually. He made them the food of His soul, the material and the basis of His marvellous ministry—the divine authority of His perfect path.

In all this He was our great Exemplar. Oh! may we follow His blessed footsteps! May we bring ourselves, our ways, our habits, our associations, our surroundings, to the test of holy scripture, and reject, with whole-hearted decision, everything, no matter what or by whom propounded, that will not bear that searching light.

We are most thoroughly persuaded that in hundreds of thousands of cases, the first grand point to be gained is to recall the heart to that delightful attitude in which the word of God is *fully* owned and submitted to as an absolute authority. It is positively labour lost to be

arguing and disputing with a man who does not give scripture the selfsame place that our Lord Christ gave it. And when a man does this, there is no need of argument. What is really needed is to make the word of God the basis of our individual peace and the authority of our individual path. May we all do so!

"BUT JESUS COULD HEAR ME IN THE DARK."

In one of the humble dwellings of the poor, not very far from London, there lived and died, some years ago, a dear, dear little boy, only eight years old. But young though he was, he had learnt at the Sunday school to know and love Jesus. At so tender an age, and with bad training at home, we must not suppose that he could know much; but he knew Jesus as his Saviour; he knew Him as the One who loved him and died for him on the cross, and who heard and answered his prayers. And this made him happy, and taught him to trust in Jesus and pray to Him. But we must leave the reader, and especially our young readers, to draw their own conclusions as to this precious little boy, when they read the account of his last evening in this world.

He was told not to touch the candle before going into his bed; that his mother would come and take it away when she was ready. He was in his little chamber alone, the small candle giving its feeble light. But he was not alone; the presence of Jesus was there, and bright guardian angels watched over him. We will not speak about the poor clothes that he wore, or

about no one being there to put him comfortably to bed, like many boys who will read this paper. But look at him in his little room; he kneels down—not to *say* a prayer which he had learnt, and then hurry into bed—but to *pray* from the heart to Jesus. It would appear that he had been particularly happy that night in prayer, for when his mother came in to take away the candle he was still on his knees praying. "What," said his mother—who seems to have been a rough and hasty woman—"are you not in your bed yet? I will take away the candle and leave you in the dark." Sweetly he looked up in her face—his own radiant with the divine presence—and said, "But Jesus could hear me in the dark, mother!" He was soon in bed, the candle was removed; but that night Jesus hushed His precious lamb to sleep on His own bosom, to awake no more in this wilderness world.

The following morning his mother began to wonder why he was not making his appearance as usual, and going into his room she saw he was still in bed. In throwing down the clothes to give him a shake, her hand touched a cold and lifeless body. Her boy was dead. His happy soul had gone to be with the Jesus he loved. His poor unhappy mother could never again disturb him when praying, or leave him in the dark. He was now in that "happy land, far, far away"—far away from the darkness of night; far away from all unkind looks and words; far away from cold and hunger. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." . . . . . "They shall hunger no more,

neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. xxii. 5; vii. 16, 17.

> "That beautiful land, the city of light,
> It never has known the shades of night;
> The glory of God, the light of day,
> Hath driven the darkness far away."

Many a little boy and girl too, have been deeply affected by hearing the story of this dear boy; and thousands more will yet be interested when they read in "Things New and Old" of the last evening he spent in his little chamber; and they will be sure and remember that he was only eight years old. But he loved Jesus very much, because he believed that Jesus loved him, and had washed all his sins away in His precious blood, and made him quite fit to be with Him in heaven. And perhaps Jesus was angry with his mother for telling him he ought not to have prayed so long, and for threatening to leave him in the dark. "Go," He may have said to the angels that surround His throne; "Go, and bring up to Me the soul of that little boy." And bright angels come at His command; they fly on rapid wing to do His will. And though no kind mother or tender nurse were there to lift up his head when he was dying, and ask him if he would like a little water, or even to moisten his parched lips or cool his burning brow, the angels of God were there, thronging around his little bed, and watching for his last breath. And the moment his breathing stopped, and the heart ceased to beat,

his happy soul left the body, and the angels laid it on their soft and downy wings, and carried it to heaven. Our little boy-readers will remember that this is just what Jesus Himself tells us about a poor man that died long ago. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Luke xvi. 22.

"Around the throne of God in heaven,
Thousands of children stand:
Children whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy, happy band,
Singing glory, glory, glory."

And now, would not every little boy and every little girl, who reads this touching story, like to be as happy as that poor boy was? And would they not like if they were to be taken ill and die, to be carried by the beautiful angels straight up to heaven? They would not like, we know, to be seized by the evil angels and dragged down to hell—that awful place—how different to where the happy little boy is? There, all are perfectly happy. No tears will ever fall from their eyes in heaven. Their white robes will never be stained with a single tear. They sing there, but never weep; they praise the Lamb unceasingly; they shout for joy, but shed no tears. Poor little boys often cry in this world because they are cold and hungry; but all those who believe in Jesus and go to be with Him for ever, shall be cold no more, hungry no more, and cry no more. Jesus, who loved them and washed them from their sins in His precious blood, takes care of them now. They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He leads them with His own loving hand. They eat of the

tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God, and they drink of the pure river of the water of life which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. They will never be cold, or hungry, or thirsty, or persecuted any more. They have reached their happy home, the new Jerusalem, the city of their God and Father.

"We sing of the realms of the blest,
That country so bright and so fair,
And oft are its glories confessed,
But what must it be to be there?

We speak of its pathways of gold,
Its walls decked with jewels so rare;
Its wonders and pleasures untold—
But what must it be to be there?"

But our dear young readers, we sincerely hope and pray, will not forget that there is another place besides "the realms of the blest, with its walls decked with jewels so rare;" and children who care nothing for Jesus are in danger of going to that awful place. For we know there are many children who are more than eight years old, that soon grow weary of prayer, and of hearing about Jesus. And if they were to live and die in that careless state, and their sins unpardoned, the gates of heaven would be shut against them, and the gates of hell would be open to receive them. Then all hope would perish and the agonies of despair begin. All the cold and hunger, and sufferings of every kind in this world, are nothing compared with the torments of that place. The weary soul may say, "O, where shall I find rest?" But no rest can be found in hell. "O, where shall I find water? I am parched with thirst." But no water can be found in hell. Oh, when

shall these flames be quenched?" But the awful answer is—"Never, never." There is nothing to be seen or heard all around, but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The tears are falling in floods, but there is no kind hand now to wipe them away. And all this must be for ever and ever.

Surely our dear young friends will hesitate no longer as to which of these places is to be theirs for ever. Surely they will be careless about Jesus and their precious souls no more. Surely they will come to Jesus now, and pray to Him like that dear little boy. Come, then, O come, dear children; O come to Jesus—the Jesus who died on the cross for you—the Jesus who shed His precious blood to wash your sins away, and make you whiter than snow. O believe in Jesus, love Jesus, trust in Jesus, pray to Jesus, seek always to please Jesus, and rejoice in the hope of being happy with Jesus, where you will wave your palm and wear your crown for ever. "Suffer little children to come unto me," are His own sweet and blessed words, "and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark x. 14.

"How loving is Jesus, who came from the sky,
In tenderest pity, for sinners to die!
His hands and His feet were nailed to the tree,
And all this He suffered for sinners like me.

How precious is Jesus to all who believe,
And out of His fulness what grace they receive!
When weak He supports them, when erring he guides,
And everything needful He kindly provides.

How gladly does Jesus free pardon impart
To all who receive Him by faith in their heart:
Bright glory is theirs, their home is above,
And Jesus will take them to dwell in His love."

THE THIRSTY TRAVELLERS.

THE sun had set on Palestina's land,
And crescent moon awhile the vigil kept;
As by her light, ere Jaffa's inmates slept,
The travellers, a feeble little band,
Through Jaffa's gardens started on their way.

Horse, mule and ass at roadside fountain drink,
Then on the Ramleh road they keep their way;
Ere Ramleh's reached, the moon, of feeble ray,
Behind the western clouds doth also sink,
And air in coolness, night in darkness grows.

Thus mile succeeds on mile, and hour on hour,
Till Ramleh's walls and towers are far behind;
Then thirst inspires the strong desire to find,
Or well, or fountain, or a prickly pear;
But none there are, or darkness them conceals.

"When shall we quench our thirst?" "The muleteer
Is searching with a keen and practised eye."
The hope deferred, heart saddening reply,
Again and yet again falls on the ear;
And thirst increasing is, and failing hope.

But now amidst the deepest gloom of night,
Eleven becomes the little band of four;
Of Ramoth Gilead the governor,
And Nablus Mufti with their turbans white,
And horsemen five their company unite.

Salutes exchanged, and free enquiries made,
"Whence do you come, and whither are you bound?"
The thirsty hear the soul-refreshing sound:
"Would you drink water?" Soon their thirst's allayed
From leathern bottle to the girdle joined.

So let the Christian with the Arab vie,
As this with earthly, that with heavenly store,
To fellow travellers to th' eternal shore,
Extend the draught; who drinks shall never die;
And point to CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

T. J.

CORRESPONDENCE.

14. "Daisy," Torquay. The publisher is the one to whom you should apply.

15. "R. M.," Kingstown. Does not Revelation xi. 3, 4 shew that the olive trees and the witnesses are identical? Looked at in one aspect they are "witnesses"—in another, "olive trees"—in another, "candlesticks." We can see the beauty and moral fitness of each title.

16. "T. R. W.," Bristol. Your idea is interesting; but one could not teach it with authority. No doubt, these numbers which you quote (7, 12, 24, 40, 70) do make up "one hundred and fifty and three." But whether this latter is intended to set forth "the sum total of all the perfect numbers in scripture" is more than we could venture to affirm.

17. "H. C. C.," Peckham. "Studies on the Book of Daniel," by J. N. D, and "Lectures on the Book of Daniel" by W. Kelly, may help you.

18. "G. F.," Wakefield. We could not attempt to offer any judgment in such a case, without a thorough knowledge of all the facts. Any opinion given without such knowledge must necessarily be worthless. We believe that, so long as there is a single fact in any given case of which we are ignorant, we are wholly incompetent to give an opinion, inasmuch as that one fact might throw such a flood of light on all the other facts as to alter their bearing completely. We ought, most sedulously, to avoid one-sided judgments, and the taking up of mere impressions which may prove in the sequel to be utterly false. We must have facts, or divine revelation, in order to form a sound judgment.

19. "G. J. W.," Feliston. The last clause of John iii. 36, is as simple as it is solemn. It tells us plainly that the wrath of God abideth on all who refuse to believe on the Son. We have been much struck with the power of this entire verse as meeting, with one mighty stroke, and completely demolishing two fatal errors of

the day, namely, universal restoration on the one hand; and annihilation on the other. "*Shall not see life.*" Here the universalist gets his divine answer. "The wrath of God *abideth* on him." Here the annihilationist gets his. If the unbeliever shall not see life, it is evident he cannot be restored. And if the wrath of God *abideth* on him, it is evident he cannot be annihilated. What living power—what overwhelming force in holy scripture!

As to Romans viii. 24, it sets forth the present condition of creation. We see death and decay—"the bondage of corruption"—stamped on everything, even on the body of the believer. Thank God, all this shall be done away. The creation shall be introduced into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. What a contrast between "the bondage of corruption" and "the liberty of the glory!"

We are truly thankful for the help derived from the answers to correspondents in our January issue. How good of the Lord to allow us to help one another! His holy name be praised!

20. "E. D. B. B.," Wandsworth. We believe the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was the attributing to Beelzebub works done by the Holy Ghost. Your reference to the three gospels is quite correct; but there is nothing in Heb. vi. 4 about blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. We believe the apostate leaders of the Jewish people were guilty of this blasphemy; and our Lord declares, "It shall not be forgiven, neither in this age (that is, of the law) neither in the coming age" (that is, the age of the Messiah).. It is a misquotation to speak of "The sin against the Holy Ghost." Of course, every sin is a sin against the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. But many souls, through simple ignorance, torture themselves with the idea that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and they cannot tell what that sin is. In 1 John v. 16, we read "There is a sin unto death," but this refers to the death of the body under the governmental dealings of God. See

1 Corinthians xi. 33. It is very important to keep close to the veritable language of holy scripture.

21. "A Constant Reader," Ipswich. You say "I read in scripture, that leaven is sin, but I am told in Matthew xiii. 33, it is not so." We believe, most surely, that leaven is expressive of evil; and we have yet to learn that Matthew xiii. 33 is any exception. The fact is, the tares, the mustard tree and the leaven do all set forth what Christianity has become, in this world, through the working of Satan. He has corrupted what was once set up in beauty and perfection. The leaven sets forth the corrupting process which has gone on in the christian profession from the very beginning. It will continue to work and come to a head, and then judgment will fall upon it.

22. "D. C.," Newmarket. Accept, dear friend, our hearty thanks for your kind and truly encouraging communication. It has refreshed us greatly; and we can only bless God, with a full heart, for all you can tell us of the help and blessing which you have found in the pages of this magazine. We deem it a rich reward for our poor labours to be allowed to feed the very feeblest lamb in all the flock of Christ. May the good Lord pour His richest and best blessings upon you!

23. "T. L.," Bishop's Stortford. All you say, beloved brother, is solemnly true. May all the Lord's dear people be kept from the spirit of the age! We want to cultivate a truly humble contrite spirit—a spirit of lowly obedience—a spirit which shall lead us to bow down, with unreserved submission, to the authority of holy scripture. "It is written" is a sentence of commanding power—a sentence uttered by our blessed Lord and Master, at the opening of His public career—referred to again and again in the course of His marvellous ministry—and reiterated, with solemn emphasis, in the ears of His disciples, as He was about to pass into the heavens. May this weighty sentence be engraved on the tablets of our hearts! If we were asked to state what we consider to be one grand want of the

day in which our lot is cast, we should say, without hesitation, it is this—we want to give the word of God its true place as the basis of our individual peace, and the sole and all-sufficient authority for our individual path. Let us unite, beloved friend, in earnest prayer to our God that He will give us grace so to do, to the praise of His holy name.

24. "R. H.," Bath. We do not consider that there is any principle involved in having two or more cups for the wine in the Lord's supper. In the matter of the loaf it is different, inasmuch as it expresses, according to 1 Corinthians x. 17, the one body. Besides, there is, in reality, to each individual communicant but the one cup, as there is the one loaf. Oh! for spiritual power to celebrate, somewhat more worthily, the precious supper of our Lord—to feed upon Him, by faith, and to remember Him according to His own loving desire, while we wait for His appearing.

25. "C. D. C.," Ashford. Like many others, you confound two distinct passages of holy scripture. "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated" was not said before the children were born, but hundreds of years after, when the real character and practical ways of each had been fully manifested. All that was said before the children were born was that "the elder shall serve the younger." It is more than a sad mistake to represent God as hating a man before he was born. In the first chapter of Amos we read "For three transgressions of Edom [Esau] and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever." Have we not here ample grounds for the divine hatred? If you will carefully compare Genesis xxv. 23 with Malachi i. 2, 3, you will see your mistake, and you will better understand the apostle's use of both passages in his magnificent argument in Romans ix.—an argument so little understood by theologians.

"TO-DAY."

A CHRISTIAN gentleman, in the south of England, once posted up the following notice outside his gate, "Whosoever will call up at my house, to-day, shall receive a ten pound note."

Many passers-by read this notice; and, as we may well imagine, many and various were the observations made upon it. Some, perhaps, looked upon it as a sham or a hoax. Others, doubtless, pronounced the writer a fool or a madman. Very few could bring themselves to believe that there was any reality or truth in the matter. They could hardly imagine that anyone would be fool enough to offer to throw away his money after such an absurd fashion.

Still, however, there was the announcement, plain enough for anyone who could read it. People might speculate, and reason as much as they would; they might raise all sorts of questions and difficulties, but there was the notice, as plain as possible, "Whosoever will call up at my house, to-day, shall receive a ten pound note."

It certainly seemed very strange. Such a novel announcement, we may safely conclude, had never before appeared on a gentleman's gate. Surely he would never be able to make it good. He would be inundated with applicants for his ten pound notes. How could he possibly meet them all? He would need all the treasure lodged in the Bank of England to make good his offer. He must either come to bankruptcy or be proved a liar. It was impossible to take it in. It lay far beyond the bounds of credibility. Who could

believe such an absurd statement? Surely the writer must be a fool, or he means to make fools of his neighbours.

Not at all. The writer of the extraordinary notice was not a fool or a madman. Neither had he a thought of making fools of others. He merely desired to illustrate a great truth, and to prove, in this novel and striking manner, the slowness of the human heart to believe good news, or to confide in disinterested kindness.

It might, at first sight, seem a dangerous experiment; but evidently the gentleman knew what he was about. He was one who understood something of the heart of man; something, too, of the heart of God; and he knew that his announcement and its results could, in the sequel, be turned to profitable account.

He was not disappointed. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that out of the number who read that notice, and reasoned and speculated upon it, there was but one who really resolved to put it to the test. Whether he really believed that he should get the ten pound note, we cannot say. At all events, he would try; and so up he went and knocked at the hall-door, and asked to see the master. He told him he had come up on the strength of a notice at the gate, promising that, "Whosoever will call up at my house, to-day, shall receive a ten pound note." Did he really mean to make that promise good? Most certainly he did; and to prove that he did, he handed the man the promised ten pound note.

Great was the astonishment of the fortunate man as he went off with his treasure. Very soon, too, the

news spread like wild-fire, that the extraordinary notice was really true, and here was a man who could actually speak from experience of the truth of it, and who was in his own person an unanswerable demonstration of the fact that the gentleman meant what he said, and said what he meant. Here was one who had believed the report, or at least had tested its truth, and he was now rejoicing in the practical results. He was the actual happy possessor of the proffered ten pounds.

The whole neighbourhood was roused to interest. The notice which before was regarded as a sham, or the production of a fool or a madman, now began to assume the aspect of solid reality. Here was a *bona fide* witness of its truth. Here was one whose eyes had seen and whose hands had handled the fruit of the promise. He had believed the report and was now in the full enjoyment of the results.

By the close of the day, the fact was well noised abroad, that one man had actually gotten the ten pound note. There was no mistake about it. He had the money. Men might argue and reason, they might sneer and shrug their shoulders, they might say what they listed about the announcement and the writer of it; "but one thing he knew," that he himself was in full possession of the ten pound note. That was all he had to say.

Well, as might be expected, this one living example had a powerful effect in leading others to believe the report. There was no getting over the palpable fact. It was, as we say, a grand reality. The consequence was that, the following morning, numbers flocked to the

good gentleman's gate; but alas! alas! the notice was gone. They called at the house to enquire if there were any more ten pound notes to be had. "No," said the gentleman, "there are no ten pound notes for you. Do you not remember the terms of my notice? And specially have you forgotten the pointed word, '*To-day?*' 'Whosoever will call up at my house, *to-day*, shall receive a ten pound note.' Had you come at any time yesterday, even up to the last moment of the eleventh hour, you should, most certainly, have gotten the proffered ten pound note; but now, it is *too late;* the time is past and gone. It may be that many of you sneered at my offer; some may have regarded it as the merest sham; some may have thought me a fool or a madman; but you all see now your mistake. The notice was plain, and simple, and true; there was no mist, no vagueness, no uncertainty about it; but you did not and would not believe it, until you saw with your eyes a man actually in possession of the money; and now you all come flocking to me, but it is *too late*—too late; there is no ten pound note for you. Had you believed the testimony yesterday, you would now be in the full enjoyment of the fruit; but the opportunity is gone for ever. I have nothing more to say."

Now, there is a two-fold lesson to be learnt from the above novel and striking incident. In the first place, it speaks to the heart of the unconverted reader, and tells him, in its own simple fashion, of the great danger of delay. "Now is the accepted time; and now is the day of salvation." There is no such thing in the word of God, as a promise of salvation to-morrow. "*To-day,*

if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." It is a fatal mistake for anyone to put off, for a single hour, the great question of his soul's salvation. No one can tell the moment in which—so far as he is concerned—the day of salvation and the acceptable year of the Lord may close for ever.

If we turn to the prophet Isaiah, chapter lxii. 2, we find the "day of vengeance" separated from "the acceptable year," by a single comma. True it is that this comma indicates a period which has already extended over eighteen long centuries; but how is this? Why has the time been lengthened out? Because "the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance."

Precious words! words breathing forth the deep and tender love of a Saviour God who does not—blessed be His name!—wish a single soul to perish. It is not possible that a God of love—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Giver of His only-begotten Son—could will the condemnation of any poor sinner. Such is the love of His heart, such the wide aspect of His grace, such the activity of His nature, that "he will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4.

Such are the distinct and oft-repeated declarations of holy scripture, such its unqualified statements which must not be gainsayed. We must ever distinguish between the aspect of God's righteousness which is "*unto* all," and its final result, which is "*upon* all them that believe." The gospel of God proclaims a free, present, and everlasting salvation to every creature

under heaven. Not one who hears that glorious gospel is excluded. All are welcome : "*whosoever* will, let him take the water of life *freely*."

These are the true and the gracious sayings of God. Let no man dare to tamper with them. Let no one presume, with his theological scissors, to clip or mutilate those lovely statements of divine grace in order to make them fit into any human system of divinity; it must not be done. There is no system under the sun which can embody, in its narrow compass, the decrees, the counsels, and the purposes of God's government, together with the loving activities, the tender yearnings, the gracious outgoings of His heart and of His nature. You must not attempt to shut up the divine nature and character within the contemptible limits of a human system. The gospel is unto all. It bears with it salvation unto all. All who hear are responsible. All who perish shall have none but themselves to blame. But, let the reader remember the terms, let him deeply ponder that solemn and weighty word, "*To-day*."

But there is a lesson for the christian reader also, in our little incident of the ten pound note. Hundreds may have read the notice and treated it with cold indifference or positive contempt; but the very moment that a case presented itself of a man who had actually received the money, the aspect of the matter was entirely changed. People might despise, or ridicule, or reject the announcement; but they could not get over the living, palpable fact. Here was a *bona fide* witness to the truth. Nothing could shake his testimony. He had proved, in his own person, the reality of the proffered ten pound note, Who could deny it?

Now this told upon the people. There was an irresistible, moral force in the fact of actual possession. This man did not need to say a word. He had but to shew the ten pound note. This spoke for itself.

And is it not just the same in reference to the gospel of God? Is there not immense power in the testimony of one who can plainly declare, in his life and ways, that he actually *has* eternal life, that *he is* saved, that his sins *are* forgiven?

Unquestionably there is. And, on the other hand, it is a serious damage to the cause of Christ when professing Christians go on in a doubting, wavering, undecided state of soul, from day to day, and year to year—"ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

There is real power in the testimony of one who can say, "We speak that we do know"—of one who exhibits, in his own spirit, style, manner, and deportment, the practical results of what he is talking about. A bright, happy, holy, consistent, devoted Christian is an unanswerable evidence of the truth of the gospel. The apostle Peter speaks of christian wives winning their husbands, "without the word"—winning them by the simple power of "a chaste conversation."

May we remember these things. May our whole bearing prove to those around us that we, at least—whatever men may say—have found out and sweetly experienced the truth of the glorious gospel of the grace of God, and felt its power to satisfy the heart, and brighten our daily path through this desert scene.

TEACH ME TO LIVE.

TEACH me to live! 'Tis easier far to die—
Gently and silently to pass away—
On earth's long night to close the heavy eye,
And waken in the realms of glorious day.

Teach me that harder lesson—*how to live*,
To serve thee in the darkest paths of life;
Arm me for conflict now—fresh vigour give,
And make me more than conqueror in the strife.

Teach me to live!—thy purpose to fulfil:
Bright for thy glory let my taper shine!
Each day renew, re-mould this stubborn will:
Closer round *thee* my heart's affections twine.

Teach me to live for self and sin no more;
But use the time remaining to me yet,
Not mine own pleasure seeking, as before—
Wasting no precious hours in vain regret.

Teach me to live! No idler let me be,
But in thy service hand and heart employ;
Prepared to do thy bidding cheerfully—
Be this my highest and my holiest joy.

Teach me to live!—my daily cross to bear;
Nor murmur though I bend beneath its load.
Only be with me. Let me feel thee near:
Thy smile sheds gladness on the darkest road.

Teach me to live!—and find my life in thee—
Looking from earth and earthly things away;
Let me not falter, but untiringly
Press on; and gain new strength and power each day.

Teach me to live!—with kindly words for all—
Wearing no cold, repulsive brow of gloom;
Waiting, with cheerful patience, till thy call
Summons my spirit to her heavenly home.

"HELPS."

THE little word which we have just penned occurs in the first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter xii. 28, where the inspired writer enumerates the various gifts and orders of ministry in the assembly. "God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, *helps*, governments, diversities of tongues."

Now, there is what we may call a beautiful undefinedness about the term "helps." We can see at a glance, and understand fully what is meant by an apostle, a prophet, a teacher, a miracle, a gift of healing, a government, a tongue.

But the full import of the term "helps" is not just so easily seized. It indicates a very wide field of happy and important christian service. There are many persons in the assembly who could not be said to possess any specific gift; they are not evangelists, pastors or teachers; but they can render effectual help to those who are.

You may sometimes find a man who is quite incompetent to take any part in public ministry, and yet he exerts a far more powerful influence for good than one who takes a prominent place. He is not a preacher or a lecturer; but he takes a deep interest in the work of such. He has no thought of occupying the desk or the platform; but it does the heart good to see the way in which he opens the door for you, leads you to a seat, hands you a bible and hymn-book.

His heart is in the work, and he is ready to do any-

thing or everything to further the good cause. There is a genial brightness and self-forgetting elasticity about the man rendering him a most delightful element in the assembly and in the work. He is ready for every good work—ready to serve all who may need his service. No matter what you want done, he is your man. Go to him when you will, or with what you will, he is always at your service. Difficulties are nothing to him. He only views them as an occasion for the display of energy. He is not encumbered with crotchets. He does not believe in them. His heart is free—his spirit fresh and bright. He loves Christ and His people, His servants and their work. He takes a profound interest in the progress of the gospel—in the salvation of souls —in the prosperity and growth of God's people. He is not self-occupied. He delights to see the work done, no matter who does it. He is ready to sweep the floor, if needs be—ready to help in every possible way in which effective help may be rendered.

Have we any difficulty in assigning such an one his place in the category of gifts? None whatever. He is one of the "helps"—a most blessed and valuable element. Would that we had more of such. We pray for evangelists, for pastors and teachers, and so we should, for we want them sadly. But we should pray for "helps" also, for they exert a marvellous influence for good, wherever they are found.

We have little idea of how much the blessing of God's people, and the progress of His work are promoted by that class of persons indicated by the brief—but comprehensive—term "helps." You may often hear a man say, "Oh! I am not an evangelist or a

teacher. I do not possess any gift for speaking." Well but you can be a help. You may not be a preacher or a teacher, but you can very effectually co-operate with such in a thousand ways. You can hold up his hands, and encourage his heart, and refresh his spirit, and further his work in numberless and nameless little ways which, you may rest assured, are most grateful to the heart of Jesus, and will be amply rewarded in the day of His coming glory.

It is a very great mistake indeed to suppose that no one can help on the Lord's people or the Lord's work unless he has some special gift. Every one has his own place to fill, his work to do. Every bird has his own note, except the mocking bird. This latter has nothing of its own, but mimics the notes of others. How much better to be real and simple—to give forth my own note, even though it be but the note of a robin, than to be seeking to imitate the thrush or the nightingale.

What we really want is *a heart* for the Lord's work. Where there is this, it will not be a question as to my gift. I shall be ready for every good work. Even though my gift may be most distinct, I should hold myself in constant readiness to lend a helping hand to others, to put my shoulder to the wheel, to further the blessed work in every possible way. Gift or no gift, if I really love Christ, I shall seek to promote His cause and His glory. If I cannot preach the gospel, I can gather and I can pack the people. I can make them welcome and seek to make them comfortable and happy. I can prove that my whole soul is in the work, and thus give a holy impetus to others. I can help by prayer,

by my presence, by my very look. A genial heart, a bright happy spirit, a mind freed from petty and detestable jealousies, a cordial well wisher may prove a most delightful "help" to the work and the workman.

Beloved christian reader, let us give ourselves to earnest prayer, that the Lord may be pleased to develop in our midst that most interesting and valuable agency suggested by the heading of this paper. And may we all seek to do what we can for the furtherance of the cause and glory of that blessed One who gave His life to rescue us from everlasting burnings.

"TELL ME OF ONE TO LOVE THAT WILL NEVER DIE."

So said a little girl to her mother one day, when feeling lonely and sorrowful after the death of a little brother. They had been loving companions, constantly together, and she, being the elder, no doubt exercised a watchful care over him, and felt a personal interest in him. It was early days with her, she was but a child; nevertheless, she felt as many in later years have felt, that she was now without an object in this life, or one to live for. In her little way, she was alone and desolate. The heart feels at such a moment that there is nothing left here to love. A dark shade seems to be settled down on everything.

While little Fanny's sorrow was still fresh, and her bereavement keenly felt, she said to her mother what maturer years never could have said; knowledge or art would have marred its simplicity, and we should have

lost one of the most expressive sayings ever uttered by human lips. "Mamma," she said, with weeping eyes, "*can you not tell me of one to love that will never die?*" Oh, wonderful words! we are ready to exclaim; they come from the depths of the heart and simply express its real condition. A desire which the whole world could not satisfy; and, further, we hesitate not to say, that never was the need of a bereaved human heart more truthfully expressed than in these artless words of that little child. This is all the broken heart needs; *one to love that will never die.* There is but one, and only one, that can meet the heart's deep necessities. The question of the child is the heart's breathing after Him, the aspirations of grace, we doubt not, that will surely be satisfied. Oh, Jesus, Jesus risen and glorified, Thou art the One, the only One that can bind up the broken and bleeding heart, that can fill up the aching void and fully satisfy all its desires! To see thee in resurrection, to know thy love and thy endless life, to know thee as a Man in glory, when wandering alone and desolate amidst the shadows of death, is to be folded in thine arms, raised up from the depths of sorrow, and set in the light of thine own love where no shadows can ever come. This is to love One and to be loved by One that will never die; One whose love creates its own reflection.

The mother, we understand, suggested to her child the Saviour's appeal to Peter, "Lovest thou me?" Did she love Jesus? He would never die. But here we will take leave of our little friend and her mother, ever grateful for the words that have so touched our hearts; our one object in this brief paper being to draw

attention to the question which expresses the real desire of every human heart—"*Can you not tell me of one to love that will never die?*"

Nothing can ever satisfy the human heart, or meet the need of an immortal soul, that is not *perfect* in its nature and *eternal* in its duration. It must be both perfect and permanent. Jesus risen, Jesus beyond death and the grave, Jesus as the Man who died on the cross and who lives on the throne, is the full answer to the soul's desires. Nothing else, no one else, can ever meet its need in the smallest degree; so that unless the soul finds Jesus it must remain for ever unsatisfied. Apart from Him there is not so much as a drop of cold water to cool the burning tongue; but in Him the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and dwells for us, that of His fulness we may all receive and grace for grace. The vast resources of king Solomon failed to fill his heart; but the Jesus that the poor sun-burnt slave found, as in Solomon's Song, overflowed hers. Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, *passim*.

Love to the Saviour is one of the fairest demands of the gospel, and fairly made on all mankind, and the lack of it in any is threatened with the most awful judgment. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." This is most solemn, but just; His love bears a benign aspect to all. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) But how am I to love Him? many will say; I desire and try to love Him, but my heart is so cold. That is true of all, and none could ever love Him if they only looked at their own cold hearts. It is only by knowing His love to us that begets—that increases our love to Him. We can

only follow in love, we can never go before Him. Our love to Him can never rise above our apprehension of His love to us. As the fire we sit at warms us, so will His love warm our cold hearts if we are near enough to Him; but the fire is there. As this subject is all important and a difficulty with many, we will endeavour to make it plain.

The great burden of the gospel message is to speak of One to love that will never die, and of His great love to us as manifested in His death on the cross; and that this is the true ground and real spring of our love to Him. "We love him because he first loved us." When we see how much He loves us, and that He willingly died for us, it is not difficult to yield up the heart to Him. But we can never love Jesus until we believe in His love for us, and in His dying in our stead. Thus we see, that it is only His love to us that can create love in our hearts to Him. But when we believe that He so loved us as to bear the judgment of our sins in His own body on the tree, that He might have us to Himself and with Himself for ever, we must love Him, adore Him, trust Him, and long to be with Him. We could not help doing so. It is easy to love Him when we see His great love to us. In place of *trying* to love the Lord, as Christians sometimes say, let us dwell more on His love to us, for rest assured that the measure of our love to Him will always be proportionate to the measure of our knowledge of His love to us. But this comes by *believing*, not by *trying*. When we believe without a misgiving in His great love to us, and in His great work for us, we shall love Him with an adoring worshipful love, and with a

confidence which gives the most unquestioning rest to the soul.

But this paper may fall into the hands of some who have never really felt the need of the heart as expressed by this little child—who have never felt the constraining power of a Saviour's love, or the grave responsibility under which that love places the whole human family. Could anything be more plain or more awfully solemn than these words, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha"—which mean "accursed; the Lord cometh"—accursed of the Lord at His coming? And mark the words, "any man," no matter who it is, no excuse will be accepted, the words are absolute—any man, every man, my reader, all who love not the Lord Jesus Christ, must fall under the terrible curse of God—the fearful judgment of slighted love. And just when the bright beams of His coming glory begin to cheer and lighten this long, dark, and gloomy world, they must be banished from the face of the earth and cast into outer darkness.

But in what sense are we to love Christ? some will say; for we have never seen Him, and it seems very difficult, and the consequences of not loving Him are truly awful. To love Christ, in a divine sense, is to *believe* in Him, as we have already said, and as Peter says to the scattered strangers, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet *believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The scriptures make much of *believing*. The heart that doubts whether it be the testimony of God or of men is powerless to love. Believing is the root

and spring of all that is right before God; without faith it is impossible to please Him. But let us suppose a case before men.

A cry is heard, "A man drowning! A man drowning!" For the third time he is about to sink, exhausted, to rise no more. A brave heart rushes to the water's edge, sees the danger, plunges in and succeeds in saving the man. He is perfectly insensible, knows not his deliverer, but is kindly laid on a bed and recovers. After he is well, his friends tell him who it was that saved him; but he says, "I can't believe it." A thousand witnesses are ready to prove the fact, but still he says, "I can't believe it, I did not see him or feel him do it." He becomes offended by hearing so many speak to the praise of the one who saved him, and in condemnation of his own unbelief and ingratitude. He thinks a great deal too much is said about it; for his own part he cannot believe it, though little children rebuke his unbelief by chanting the hero's praise. But more, and worse; he meets his deliverer in the street, who is anxious to embrace him as the one whom his love and courage saved; but he resists him, rejects him, despises him; and still more, and still worse, he is angry with all his townsmen who seek to honour this kind neighbour. What would the world say of such a man—were it possible to find such a case of unbelief amongst men—would it not condemn him without a single dissentient voice? But on the other hand, supposing he were to believe the fact—believe it with all its perilous circumstances; what would be his gratitude and his esteem for his saviour? Could he ever forget the day of his deliverance, or fail to remember it with

some memorial of his love? The application, my reader, is easy. What side hast thou taken? What thinkest thou of Christ?

Christian love, then, springs from *believing*—hatred, opposition, from *unbelief*; it is the love of confidence, of adoration, of delight, of hope, of appreciation. Surely if I meditate on the love of Christ to me—the love that plunged into the depth of all my ruin to save me, that endured so much to fit me for His presence, and to have me with Him for ever—it cannot be difficult to love Him in return; it cannot be difficult to fall at His feet in the truest adoration of admiring praise. Believe then, O my reader, believe in His love; dwell, O dwell on His love, until thy heart burns, thy lips praise, and thy whole soul be on fire in thy rapturous admiration of His wondrous love to thee.

Jesus has all my powers possess'd,
My hopes, my fears, my joys,
He, the dear sovereign of my breast,
Shall still command my voice.

His charms shall make my numbers flow,
And hold the falling floods,
While silence sits on every bough,
And bends the listening woods.

I'll carve my passion on the back,
Till every wounded tree
Shall drop and bear some mystic mark
That Jesus died for me.

The swains shall wonder, as they read,
Inscribed on all the grove,
That heaven itself came down and bled
To win a mortal's love.

CONFLICTING OPINIONS.

In visiting, a short time since, in a town in the north of England, I had occasion to call to see a person in a back street in a district with which I was not familiar. Not being sure of my way, I addressed a boy whom I saw standing with a basket of clothes, and asked him if he would kindly tell me the way to "James Street." "The second turn on your left," said he. I thanked him and moved on. But when I came to the second turn on my left, I found it was not James Street at all.

"How strange!" thought I, "that one who seemed to know the locality so well, should set me astray; and yet he spoke with such decision as though he were perfectly sure of the truth of what he was saying.

I paused, and seeing an intelligent looking man coming toward me, I said to myself, "Perhaps he will be able to guide me." "Pray, sir, can you tell me the way to James Street?" "Oh!" said he, "you are in the wrong direction altogether. You must go back again, and when you have passed three or four streets on your right, you will see James Street up on the corner of the house right before you."

This seemed satisfactory, so I at once retraced my steps, looking out eagerly for the promised notice. But alas! there was no such street to be found, and I was again brought to a pause, feeling it not a little tiresome to be thus driven up and down by the conflicting opinions of blind guides. I certainly did long for "competent authority" to direct my wandering foot-

steps into the right way; but I almost despaired of finding it.

At length, not liking to be baffled in my search after the true way, I accosted another quiet, sober, intelligent looking man, and, I suppose with a certain tone of weariness, said, "Please, sir, can you tell me the way to James Street?" "Why," said he, "you are turning your back upon it." "Oh, dear," said I, "how dreadfully tiresome. You are the third person from whom I have sought guidance. The first told me to go yonder, and turn to the left. The second told me to go right back and turn to the right; and now you tell me I am all wrong and must retrace my steps. Whatever is a poor ignorant stranger to do in the face of such conflicting opinions? I cannot, for the life of me, understand how men *will* undertake—and with such cool confidence, too—to give guidance when it is manifest they are wholly incompetent. If I were asked the way to any place with which I was not thoroughly acquainted, I should, unhesitatingly and frankly, own my ignorance, and tell the enquirer to seek out a competent authority. But for men, who are wholly ignorant, to undertake to guide their fellows, is, in my judgment, not only most silly but positively unkind."

"Well," said my intelligent looking friend, "I am actually going to James Street, and I shall be happy to shew you the way." "Ah," thought I, "this is something like the thing. It does seem as though I had, at last, found out a competent authority. Here is a man who is actually in the way himself, and surely he must know it." His manner, too, was assuring.

There was nothing of the flippancy of self-confidence about him; but the calm, quiet dignity of one who seemed thoroughly and practically acquainted with what he was saying.

Still, having already been set astray by two blind guides, I confess I felt considerable diffidence in committing myself to this new authority, lest he should prove not a whit more competent than those who had gone before him. Still as he said that he himself was actually in the way, I thought I might cautiously commit myself to his guidance. I thought of the words in Hebrews xiii., "Obey those guiding you . . . . considering the end of their conversation;" and I followed my new guide.

I then observed, with much interest, that the boy to whom I spoke first of all, had set me astray not exactly by positive error, but by misplaced truth and defective information. "The second turn to the left" was right enough so far as it went; but he ought to have added, "and then the first to the right."

"Just so," mused I, "there is the way in which people are constantly misled. They get partial views of truth, in place of the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And not only are they misled themselves, but they mislead all who are foolish enough to listen to them. Here am I, tossed about and driven hither and thither by ignorant guides; and I have been thrown just as much out of the true way by partial truth as by palpable error."

Well, at length my new guide conducted me to the very *source* from whence he had derived his authority. He conducted me *to* it, and put me in personal

connection *with* it. He shewed me, as it were, the written word—the grand authority for all. No more error now; no more partial truth now, no more human testimony now. I was at the source, I read for myself, I got the truth; and all the blind guides and conflicting opinions in the world could not move me. I now knew for myself where James Street was and had no further need to look for human guidance.

The thoughtful reader will be at no loss to see the moral application of the foregoing simple narrative. It is of real importance, at the present moment. Never was there more urgent need of keeping close to that one grand and paramount authority—*the voice of holy scripture*. No human language can possibly set forth, in suited terms, the value of the full, clear, competent, because divine authority of the word of God. "It is written" is a sentence which every christian man, woman, and child should seek to have engraven on the very tablets of the heart. We can move on with a firm step and a peaceful mind, when we have that high authority for our position and our practice.

No doubt, there must be the power of the Holy Ghost to give energy to the new man in treading the path indicated by the written word. Our blessed Lord and Master, our divine Exemplar, did all His works by the power of the eternal Spirit; but He did them also by the direct authority of the written word, and never acted without it. "It is written" was the motto of His whole career from first to last. He was ever the obedient and the dependent Man.

This is our model. May we study it profoundly! May we have grace to bow down, *in all things*, to the

supreme authority of holy scripture! We are met on all hands, with the conflicting opinions of men, the theories, the notions, the schemes, and the systems of the human mind. Some would send you to the left and some to the right. Some give you partial and misapplied truth; others positive and palpable error. Others again will furnish you with ingenious theories which they have worked out by their own mental efforts; worked out, as they doubtless believe, from scripture; but still it is not scripture but the deduction or conclusion of a human mind drawn from scripture.

Then, again, the amount of positive infidelity abroad in the professing church is truly appalling. The way in which scripture is actually set aside, and man's thoughts, and reasonings, and conclusions, set up and adopted instead, should have the effect of rousing the Lord's people, everywhere, to a deeper sense of the claims of the written word. We have but little idea of the way in which the enemy has succeeded in displacing the word of God in the hearts of professing Christians, and setting up a foreign authority instead. How few, comparatively, can be found who acknowledge the absolute authority of scripture in everything. And yet we read that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be *perfect, throughly furnished to all good works.*" 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

And, not only so; but the same scriptures can make a child wise unto salvation. The written word meets a little child, and makes him wise unto salvation. It meets a man of God, and furnishes him throughly to

all good works. What more is needed? "Wise unto salvation—perfect—throughly furnished." Can man add aught to this? Need we betake ourselves to the conflicting opinions of men, to the opposing schools of divinity, to the bewildering traditions of fathers or doctors? No; thanks be to God, His own precious word is quite sufficient. That word is plain, clear, full, powerful, and all-sufficient. It has come to us fresh from our Father's loving heart, and contains ample guidance for all the details of our individual path, and all the exigencies of the assembly of God's people wherever convened.

The good Lord be praised for such a provision! What rest for the heart! What stability for the path! What perfect calmness for the spirit! What holy elevation above the thoughts and opinions of men! What full deliverance from human influence, and all the disturbing forces around us! There is nothing like it. A heart that bows down to the authority of holy scripture in all things, and that trusts its eternal stability, spite of everything, is a heart happily free from the bewildering power of "conflicting opinions." *May the reader prove this for himself!*



Thine alas! a *lost* condition!
Works cannot *work* thee remission,
Nor thy *goodness* do thee *good;*
Death's within thee, all about thee,
But the *remedy's* without thee,
See it in thy SAVIOUR'S BLOOD!

GLEANINGS.

WHEN Bulstrode Whitelocke was despatched as Cromwell's envoy to Sweden, in 1653, he was much disturbed in mind, as he rested at Harwich the preceding night—which was very stormy—as he thought upon the distracted state of the nation. It happened that a confidential servant slept in an adjacent bed, who, finding that his master could not sleep, at length said,—

"Pray, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a question?"

"Certainly."

"Pray, sir, do you think that God governed the world very well, before you came into it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And, pray, sir, do you think that He will govern it quite as well when you are gone out of it?"

"Certainly."

"Then, pray, sir, excuse me, but do you not think that you may trust Him to govern it quite as well as long as you are in it?"

To this question Whitelocke had nothing to reply; but turning about, soon fell fast asleep, till he was summoned to embark.

1 Peter v. 7. A man carrying a burden was overtaken by a rich man as he drove along, and invited to get up behind in the carriage, which he thankfully did. After a while, the rich man looked round, and saw the burden still strapped to the traveller's back. He therefore asked him why he did not lay down his pack on the seat beside him. But he answered, he could not think of doing that; it was quite enough that he

himself should be allowed to sit behind the carriage, without putting his burden on the seat also. Thus often do God's people fear to lay *too much* upon Him who has bidden us to "cast *all* our care upon Him," and assured us that "He careth for us."

"THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD."

EPHESIANS II. 2.

MARK yon broad and rapid stream!
Brilliant though its surface seem,
Mingling in its depths below
Poisonous currents surely flow.
Christian parent, pause to think
On that treacherous river's brink,
Ere you launch your tiny bark
On those waters deep and dark.
Yours the path of Jesus here;
Seek it for your children dear.
Though you cannot life impart,
Cannot bow the stubborn heart,
Do not help to weave a chain
You would gladly break again.
Shall not He who for you died
Food and raiment still provide?
He who has your children given,
He can bless for earth and heaven.
Seek then first His holy will,
Seek His pleasure to fulfil,
Constant still in faith and prayer
That this blessing they may share.
And when by the Spirit's power
Comes the gladly welcomed hour,
When the lips you love so well
Of a Saviour's grace shall tell,
They will have no cause to say
That you turned their feet astray;
Rather, from their earliest youth
Taught and nurtured in the truth,
May their light unhindered shine,
To the praise of grace divine.

ANON.

26. "A. T.," London. The special point in Matthew vi. 16–18, seems to be that we ought not *to seek* the notice of others in the matter of fasting. "That thou appear not unto men to fast." There is nothing said about trying to hide it from men. In short there should be entire forgetfulness of self and of the thoughts of others, in all the great branches of practical righteousness presented in this marvellous discourse, namely, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving Hypocrites *sought* the notice of people in these things; we should not do so, but seek to act before God alone. I cannot help it, if my servant happens to see me at prayer, or if a person in the street sees me giving an alms, or if my friends know that I am fasting. But, were I to do any of these things *in order to be seen*, I should be acting as the hypocrites, and I should have my reward in the praise bestowed upon me for my wonderful piety and benevolence. The grand point is to walk in the immediate presence of God. This will give reality, simplicity, and moral elevation to our entire course, conduct, and character.

27. "S. C.," Melrose. 1 Corinthians xiv. 34, 35, does not, in our judgment, apply to such a meeting as you describe. We can see no objection to a sister's asking a question at a reading meeting, provided always that the question be not put in such a style as proves that the enquirer is really the teacher.

28. "E. S. M.," Cork. John x. 34, refers to Psalms lxxxii. 6, where the judges and rulers are called "gods." The king, governor, judge, or magistrate is the expression of the power of God; and hence we should consider ourselves bound to swear if called upon by a magistrate or judge to do so.

1 Corinthians ix. 19–22, teaches us the exquisite lesson of self-denial in order to meet the condition of others with a direct view to their salvation. This passage is frequently used for the direct opposite,

namely, for self-indulgence, and mixing ourselves up with all sorts of wrong things, under the plea of "being all things to all men;" and, in result, instead of "gaining them," and delivering them out of the evil and folly in which they are involved, we fall under the power of these things ourselves, to the great dishonour of our Lord and the serious damage of souls.

29. "J. G. C.," Newport. We can see nothing wrong in your employing your leisure hours in the way you name, provided it be on the principle of "working with your hands the thing which is good that you may have to give him that needeth." In this excellent way, instead of "amusing yourself" you may help others, and further the cause of Christ.

30. "J. R.," Tetbury. Accept our hearty thanks for your faithful hint as to using simple language. We trust we shall be enabled to profit by it.

31. "S. M.," Cheltenham. Thanks for your two communications, and the accompanying lines. You say truly "we are inundated with poetry." It would be utterly impossible to insert the tenth part of what is sent to us under that head.

32. "W. W.," Farnham. We thank you, most heartily, for your very encouraging letter. How good of our God to send us, from time to time, sweet and heart-cheering assurances that our poor labours are not in vain in the Lord. Blessed be His name, He knows the sorrows and the exercises of a workman's heart, and He knows how to send the word of comfort at the right time. Your letter has greatly refreshed and cheered us.

33. A post-card has come to hand from Parsonstown, without any signature, enquiring if old numbers of "Things New and Old" are still wished for by "W. R. H.," 106, Grosvenor Road, London. We beg to say, in reply, that all such will be thankfully received and usefully applied.

JEHOVAH'S DEMAND AND SATAN'S OBJECTIONS.

"*Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.*" Exodus v. 1.

What a volume of truth is contained in the sentence which we have just penned! It is one of those comprehensive and suggestive passages which lie scattered up and down the divine volume, and which seize, with peculiar power, upon the heart, and open up a vast field of most precious truth. It sets forth, in plain and forcible language, the blessed purpose of the Lord God of Israel to have His people completely delivered from Egypt and separated unto Himself, in order that they might feast with Him in the wilderness. Nothing could satisfy His heart, in reference to them, but their entire emancipation from the land of death and darkness. He would free them not only from Egypt's brick-kilns and task-masters, but from its temples and its altars, and from all its habits and all its associations, from its principles, its maxims, and its fashions. In a word, they must be a thoroughly separated people, ere they could hold a feast to Him in the wilderness.

Thus it was with Israel, and thus it is with us. We, too, must be a fully and consciously delivered people ere we can properly serve, worship, or walk with God. We must not only know the forgiveness of our sins, and our entire freedom from guilt, wrath, judgment, and condemnation; but also our complete deliverance from this present evil world and all its belongings, ere we can intelligently serve the Lord. The world is to the Christian what Egypt was to Israel; only, of course,

our separation from the world is not local or physical, but moral and spiritual. Israel left Egypt in person; we leave the world in spirit and principle. Israel left Egypt in fact; we leave the world in faith. It was a real, out-and-out, thorough separation for them, and it is the same for us. "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness."

1. To this rigid separation, as we very well know, Satan had and still has many objections. His first objection was set forth in the following words spoken by the lips of Pharaoh, "Go ye, *and sacrifice to your God in the land.*" These were subtle words—words well calculated to ensnare a heart that was not in communion with the mind of God. For it might with great plausibility and apparent force, be argued, Is it not uncommonly liberal on the part of the king of Egypt to offer you toleration for your peculiar mode of worship? Is it not a great stretch of liberality to offer your religion a place on the public platform? Surely you can carry on your religion as well as other people. There is room for all. Why this demand for separation? Why not take common ground with your neighbours? There is no need surely for such extreme narrowness.

All this might seem very reasonable. But then mark Jehovah's high and holy standard! Hearken to the plain and positive declaration, "Let my people go!" There is no mistaking this. It is impossible, in the face of such a statement, to remain in Egypt. The most plausible reasonings that ever could be advanced vanish into thin air in the presence of the authoritative demand of the Lord God of Israel. If He says, "Let my people go," then go we must, spite of all the opposing power

of earth and hell, men and devils. There is no use in reasoning, disputing, or discussing. We must obey. Egyptians may think for themselves; Jehovah must think for Israel; the sequel will prove who is right.

And here let us just offer our readers a word, in passing, as to the subject of "narrowness," about which we hear so much now-a-days. The real question is, "Who is to fix the boundaries of the Christian's faith? Is it man or God—human opinion or divine revelation?" When this question is answered, the whole matter is easily settled. There are some minds terribly scared by the bugbear of "narrow-mindedness." But then we have to inquire what *is* narrowness, and what breadth of mind? Now, what we understand by a narrow mind is simply a mind which refuses to take in and be governed by the whole truth of God. A mind governed by human opinions, human reasonings, worldly maxims, selfish interests, self-will—this we unhesitatingly pronounce to be a narrow mind.

On the other hand, a mind beautifully subject to the authority of Christ—a mind that bows down, with reverent submission, to the voice of holy scripture—a mind that sternly refuses to go the breadth of a hair beyond the written word—that absolutely rejects everything—no matter what or whence it comes—which is not based upon "Thus saith the Lord,"—this is what we call a broad mind.

Reader, is it not—must it not be so? Is not God's word—His mind, infinitely more comprehensive, wide, and full than the word—the mind of man? Is there not infinitely greater breadth in the holy scriptures than in all the human writings under the sun? Does

it not argue much greater breadth of mind, largeness of heart, and devotion of soul to be governed by the thoughts of God than by our own thoughts or the thoughts of our fellows? It seems to us there can be but one reply to these questions; and hence the entire subject of narrowness resolves itself into this simple but very telling motto, "We must be as narrow as Christ and as broad as Christ."

Yes, here lies the grand solution of this and of every other difficulty. We must view everything from this blessed standpoint, and then our entire range of vision will be correct, and all our conclusions thoroughly sound. But if Christ be not our standpoint, but self, or man, or the world, then our entire range of vision is false, and all our conclusions thoroughly unsound.

All this is as clear as a sunbeam to a single eye and an honest and loyal heart. And really if the eye be not single and the heart true to Christ, and the conscience subject to the word, it is a complete loss of time to argue or discuss. Of what possible use can it be to argue with a man who, instead of obeying the word of God, is only seeking to turn aside its edge? None whatever. It is a hopeless task to reason with one who has never taken in the mighty moral import of that most precious word—obey.

We must now return to our immediate theme. There is something uncommonly fine in Moses' reply to Satan's first objection, "It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God; lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilder-

ness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us." Exodus viii. 26.

There would have been a lack of moral fitness in presenting to Jehovah, in sacrifice, the object of Egyptian worship. But, more than this, Egypt was not the place in which to erect an altar to the true God. Abraham had no altar when he turned aside into Egypt. He abandoned his worship and his strangership when he went down thither; and if Abraham could not worship there, neither could his seed. An Egyptian might ask, why? But it is one thing to ask a question, and another thing to understand the answer. How could the Egyptian mind enter into the reasons of a true Israelite's conduct? Impossible. What could such an one know of the meaning of a "three days' journey?" Absolutely nothing. "Beloved, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." The motives which actuate, and the objects which animate, the true believer *lie far beyond the world's range of vision; and we may* rest assured that in the exact proportion in which the world can enter into and appreciate a Christian's motives must the Christian be unfaithful to his Lord.

We speak, of course, of proper christian *motives*. No doubt there is much in a Christian's life that the world can admire and value. Integrity, honesty, truthfulness, disinterested kindness, care for the poor, self-denial. All these things may be understood and appreciated; but, admitting all this, we return, with deeper emphasis, to the apostolic statement that "The world knoweth us not," and if we want to walk with God—if we would hold a feast unto Him—if it is our heart's true and earnest desire to run a consistent heavenly course, we

must break with the world altogether, and break with *self* also, and take our stand outside the camp with a world-rejected heaven-accepted Christ. May we do so, with fixed purpose of heart, to the glory of His own precious and peerless name!

2. Satan's second objection is very near akin to his first. If he cannot succeed in keeping Israel in Egypt, he will at least try to keep them as near to it as possible. "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only *ye shall not go very far away*." Chapter viii. 28.

There is very much more damage done to the cause of Christ by an apparent, partial, half-hearted giving up of the world, than by remaining in it altogether. Wavering, undecided, half-and-half professors injure the testimony and dishonour the Lord, far more than thorough out-and-out worldlings. And, further, we may say, there is a very wide difference indeed between *giving up certain worldly things*, and *giving up the world itself*. A person may lay aside certain forms of worldliness, and, all the while, retain the world deep down in the heart. We may give up the theatre, the ball room, the race course, the billiard table, the concert, the flower show, and the croquet ground; and yet cling to the world all the same. We may lop off some of the branches, and yet cling, with fonder tenacity, to the old trunk.

This must be carefully seen to. We feel persuaded that what hundreds of professing Christians need is to make a clean break with the world—yes, with the world, in all the length and breadth, depth and fulness of that very comprehensive word. It is utterly impossi-

ble to make a proper start, much less to make any progress, while the heart is playing fast and loose with the holy claims of Christ. We do not hesitate to express it as our settled conviction that, in thousands of cases, where souls complain of doubts and fears, ups and downs, darkness and heaviness, lack of assurance, and comfort, of light, liberty, joy, peace, and vivid realization, it is owing to the simple fact that they have never really broken with the world. They either seek to hold a feast to the Lord in Egypt, or they remain so near as to be easily drawn back again—so near that they are neither one thing nor the other—so near that whatever influence they possess tells all the wrong way—tells against Christ and for the enemy.

How can such people be happy? How can their peace flow as a river? How can they possibly walk in the light of a Father's countenance, or in the joy of a Saviour's presence? How can the blessed beams of that sun that shines in the new creation reach them through the murky atmosphere that envelopes the land of death and darkness? Impossible. They must break with the world, and make a clear, decided, whole-hearted surrender of themselves to Christ. There must be a full Christ for the heart and a full heart for Christ.

Here, we may rest assured, lies the grand secret of christian progress. We must make a proper start before ever we can get on; and in order to make a proper start we must break our links with the world, or rather, we must believe and practically carry out the fact that God has broken them for us, in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The cross has separated us for ever from this present evil world. It has not merely delivered

us from the eternal consequences of our sins, but from the present power of sin, and from the principles, maxims, and fashions of a world that lieth in the hands of the wicked one.

It is one of Satan's masterpieces to lead professing Christians to rest satisfied with looking to the cross for salvation while remaining in the world, or occupying a border position—"not going very far away." This is a terrible snare, against which we most solemnly warn the christian reader. What is the remedy? True heart-devotedness to, and fellowship with, a rejected and glorified Christ. To walk with Christ, to delight in Him, to feed upon Him, we must be apart from this godless, christless, wicked world—apart from it in the spirit of our minds, and in the affections of our hearts—apart from it, not merely in its gross forms of moral pravity, or the wild extravagance of its folly and gaiety, but apart from its religion, its politics, and its philanthropy—apart from the world in all that goes to make up that extensive phrase.

But here we may be asked, "Is Christianity merely a stripping, an emptying, a giving up? Does it only consist of prohibition and negation?" We answer, with hearty and blissful emphasis, *No!* A thousand times, *No!* Christianity is pre-eminently positive—intensely real—divinely satisfying. What does it give us in lieu of what it takes from us? It gives us "unsearchable riches" in place of "dung and dross." It gives us "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven," instead of a poor passing bubble on the stream of time. It gives us Christ, the joy of the heart of God—the object of heaven's worship

—the theme of angels' song—the eternal sunlight of the new creation, in lieu of a few moments of sinful gratification and guilty pleasure. And finally, it gives us an eternity of ineffable bliss and glory in the Father's house above, instead of an eternity in the awful flames of hell.

Reader, what sayest thou to these things? Is not this a good exchange? Can we not find here the most cogent reasons for giving up the world? It sometimes happens that men favour us with their reasons for resigning this, that, and the other branch of worldliness; but it strikes us that all such reasons might be summed up in one, and that one be thus enunciated: "A reason for resigning *the world—I have found Christ.*" This is the real way to put the matter. Men do not find it very hard to give up cinders for diamonds—ashes for pearls—dross for gold. No; reader, and in the same way, when one has tasted the preciousness of Christ, there is no difficulty in giving up the world; nay, the difficulty would be to retain it. If Christ fills the heart, the world is not only driven out, but kept out. We not only turn our back upon Egypt, but we go far enough away from it never to return. And for what? To do nothing? To have nothing? To be gloomy, morose, melancholy, sour, or cynical? No; but to "hold *a feast* to the Lord." True it is "in the wilderness;" but then the wilderness is heaven begun when we have Christ there with us. He is our heaven, blessed be His name!—the light of our eyes, the joy of our hearts, the food of our souls, for even Heaven would be no heaven without Him; and the wilderness itself is turned into a heaven by His dear, bright, soul-satisfying presence.

Nor is this all. It is not merely that the *heart* is thoroughly satisfied with Christ; but the *mind* also is divinely tranquillized as to all the details of the path—the difficulties—the questions—the knotty points that so constantly crop up to trouble and perplex those who do not know the deep blessedness of making Christ their standpoint, and viewing all in direct reference to Him.

For instance, if I am called to act for Christ in any given case, and instead of looking at the matter simply in its bearing upon Him and His glory, I look at how it will affect *me*, I shall, most assuredly, get into darkness and hopeless perplexity, and reach a wrong conclusion. But if I simply look at Him and consider His glory, and see how the matter bears upon Him, I shall see the thing as clear as a sunbeam, and move, with holy elasticity and firm purpose, along that blessed path which is ever illuminated by the bright beams of God's approving countenance. A single eye never looks at consequences, but looks straight to Christ, and then all is simple and plain; the body is full of light, and the path marked by plain decision.

This is what is so needed in this day of easy-going profession, worldly religiousness, self-seeking, and man-pleasing. We want to make Christ our *only* standpoint—to look at self, the world, and the so-called church from thence—to make Him our centre, and reason from Him, utterly regardless of consequences. Oh! that it may be so with us, through the infinite mercy of our God. Then we shall understand something of the force, depth, beauty, and fulness of the opening sentence of this paper, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness."

TWO SOLEMN FACTS.

"*For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.*" Mark ix. 49.

In this brief passage of holy scripture, we have two distinct classes of people indicated, and two solemn facts enunciated. In the first place, we are told that "every one shall be salted with fire." And, secondly, we are told that "every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Both these statements, taken together, open a very wide field of divine truth to our view. May the Eternal Spirit enable us to enter and make our own of it! May we feel its deep solemnity—its soul-subduing power!

1. In the first clause of the passage, we are distinctly taught that judgment is appointed unto man. "It is appointed unto *men* once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) And again, "For every idle word that *men* shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

This is the solemn appointment for men—"death and judgment." We may reason as we will; we may seek to put it away from us; we may argue against it; we may say we do not believe in such things. But that, in no wise, affects the weighty fact. Of what use would it be for a poor guilty criminal, on whom sentence had just been passed, to say that he did not agree with the testimony of the witnesses, the verdict of the jury, or the sentence of the judge? How could this alter the fact of his condition? He may say, he does not believe in such things as witnesses, juries, or judges at all; but he is a guilty and condemned criminal all the same; and, in a few days, he will be executed. His thoughts and his reasonings can, in no wise, touch the

facts of his case. Opinions are one thing, and facts are another.

In like manner, men may call in question the truth of our Lord's solemn statement, that "every one shall be salted with fire." They may affect not to believe in judgment to come, or in eternal fire. They may treat such things as old wives' fables, wholly unworthy of the belief of rational, intelligent, cultivated men, and only suited for silly women and children.

But the question is, Whose word shall stand—Christ's or theirs? If Christ declares that every one shall be salted with fire, it is our wisdom, our safety, to say nothing of our bounden duty, to believe what He says—to bow down under the weight and authority of His word, to give to the winds all our own stupid reasonings, foolish notions, and proud imaginations. It is of no possible use for us to attempt to define what is or what is not suitable for God to say or do. If man is competent to judge God, then he really denies God's existence altogether, and puts himself into God's place; for, clearly, if there is a God, He must be the supreme and infallible judge of all, and man must submit. This is man's true wisdom. He must bow, sooner or later. How much better to bow in this day of grace, than to be made to bow in the day of judgment.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ declares, three times over, in Mark ix., that hell fire is eternal. There is no gainsaying this. He says, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, *into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*" This solemn statement He

reiterates three times over; and hence, though all the infidels, sceptics, rationalists, that ever were, are now, or ever shall be in this world, were to presume to say that punishment is not eternal, we should place our blessed Lord's statement in front of all their arguments, reasonings, deductions, conclusions, and imaginations, and utterly and absolutely reject them all. This we consider to be our true wisdom, our moral security, our bounden duty.

It is, in our judgment, mere waste of time, to say the very least of it, to attempt to reason with men who presume to set themselves in opposition to God—to judge His word, and to pronounce upon what is, and what is not worthy of Him to do or to say. A man who dares to sit in judgment upon his Creator is not likely to be moved by the arguments of a fellow-creature. And most assuredly all those who take upon them to say that it is unworthy of God to permit any of His creatures to suffer everlasting punishment, do, really, and to all moral intents and purposes, sit in judgment upon their Creator; and all such shall learn their egregious folly, sooner or later. Every true Christian knows and feels that "the Judge of all the earth shall do right;" but infidels presume to sit in judgment on the Judge. They are clearly wrong. Scripture is against them: and scripture cannot be broken. "*Every one* shall be salted with fire," and that fire *never* shall be quenched. The stamp of eternity is upon every wave of the lake of fire, and upon every fang of that worm which shall be the sure portion of all who die in their sins. "There is a great gulf fixed." Hell is a fixture. It can never be removed. "The wrath of God abideth."

Unconverted reader, think of these things. Think of them now. Think of them not in the darkness of infidel reasonings, but in the light of God's word. Flee, we beseech thee, from the wrath to come. Flee, at once. God has provided a way of escape for sinners. He, in His infinite love, has devised a means by which men may be delivered from this terrible salting with fire. He has given the Only-begotten Son of His bosom, to die the Just for the unjust. Jesus, the spotless holy Lamb of God, exposed Himself to the fire of divine judgment, in order that all who will simply trust Him and put their case into His hands, may not be condemned, but freely forgiven, and have eternal life. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt never be salted with fire. "The torment and the fire thine eyes shall never see."

Why? Because the precious Saviour met the judgment of God in the sinner's stead. When there was no other possible way of escape, He came, in perfect love, and exposed His own bosom to the stroke of infinite justice; and having borne the judgment, paid the penalty, died the death, God raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens, crowned with glory and honour; and now all who believe in His precious, peerless name are as freed from guilt and condemnation as He is Himself. All who put their trust in Jesus are brought into the very same place of acceptance with God that He Himself occupies. Nothing less than this could satisfy the loving heart of God—nothing less than this is worthy of the perfect sacrifice of Christ—nothing less than this could fully glorify the eternal Trinity.

Reader, is it not very much better, safer, and wiser to accept God's blessed way of escaping the judgment than to adopt the infidel plan of denying it? "Every one shall be salted with fire." This cannot be set aside. But "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," and all who believe in Him are taken, clean and for ever, off the ground of judgment. He endured the fiery salting in our stead, so that it can never apply to us who believe in Him. The heavy clouds of death and judgment burst upon the head of the sinner's Substitute, in order that the believing sinner might pass off the platform of judgment into a region where there is neither enemy nor evil occurrent.

2. And, now, we are in a position to enter into the meaning of the second clause of our weighty text which declares that "every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." This applies to all those who, through grace, are delivered from the wrath to come—from the salting with fire—from the fear of judgment. It is to such that the apostle addresses these most touching and powerful words at the opening of Romans xii., "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living *sacrifice*, holy, acceptable, unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Here the "*salt*" will be needed. "Every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking with thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." (Lev. ii. 13.) "Let your conversation be always with grace seasoned with salt."

Thus we see what a very important ingredient salt is in the daily life of a Christian. It is absolutely indis-

pensable, if we would present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. "With *all* thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." "Every oblation of thy meat-offering thou shalt season with salt," If we, by the mercy of God, and the atoning death of Christ, have been taken, once and for ever, off the ground of divine judgment, what remains? To what end is it? Surely that we may be a living sacrifice to God, that we may present the continual oblation of Christ, in all His preciousness, His fragrance, and His excellency, to the heart of God.

Yes, this is to be our grand business, morning, noon, eventide, and midnight; and for this there must be the "salt." "*Every sacrifice* shall be salted with salt." He does not say "*every one* shall be salted with salt." Alas! alas! it is not so. It is only those who know something of the mercies of God—something of the constrainings of the love of Christ, that can be a sacrifice, and all such must use salt. "Salt is good." It is pungent and preservative. "But if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith shall ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."

Mark the order and moral connection! "*Salt and peace.*" The claims of holiness must be attended to ere there can be peace. It is not peace first and then salt. No; this must not be. "The wisdom that is from above is *first pure*, then peaceable." Such is the divine order which must never be reversed. All our sacrifices, whether as holy priests or as royal priests—our sacrifices of praise to God or of doing good to men, must be accompanied with salt. There must be purity, holiness, and self-judgment, for "*every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.*"

MEDITATIONS ON THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

(Genesis xxii., xxiii., xxiv.)

ALONE, in the secret of the divine presence, separated for a little while from the outer world, and even from the activities of the Lord's work, let thy thoughts be engaged, O my soul, with that which will lead thee into the closest and sweetest communion with divine and heavenly things. The inner sanctuary is the true place for thy meditations. There, the sevenfold light of the golden candlestick shines without a veil. There is no need of a veil now; sin has been put away and God glorified. The same stroke that slew the Lamb, rent the veil. But it was rent from the top—from God's point of view—by God's own hand. Christ and His ransomed ones enter into the holiest of all without a veil; accepted in the Beloved; no more conscience of sins; liberty of access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Matthew xxviii. 51; Ephesians i. 6; Hebrews x. 2; Romans v. 2.

Such solitude is needful, it is indispensable. Not only will thy communion be thereby deepened, but thy loins will be afresh girded for work and thy sword whetted for further conflict.

The revelations of God's love to us are intended, as they are fitted, to draw our hearts nearer and nearer to Himself. And where couldst thou find, my soul, a scene of more exquisite beauty than is laid in Genesis xxiv. and the scriptures which immediately surround it, and form part of the scene? Here we have shadowed forth the Father's purposes of love concerning His Son,

the heir of all things, the passing away of Israel, the call of the bride and her heavenly home. But before dwelling on the principal features of chapter xxiv., thou wilt do well to glance briefly at chapters xxii., xxiii. These consecutive chapters, under the light of the New Testament, are full of Christ, Israel, and the church.

THE TYPICAL DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF ISAAC.

The house of Abraham being now cleared of the bondwoman and her son, and his own moral condition thoroughly judged before the Lord, he is called to pass through a great trial of faith in the offering up of his son Isaac. But it is most interesting and instructive to observe the Lord's dealings with Abraham in secret before he is called to this bright and public manifestation of his faith, and of his intelligence in the mind of God. Man of faith, and man of God, though Abraham was, we learn from chapter xx. that he had long cherished in his heart a subtile expediency of unbelief as to the specious plea of Sarah being his sister. "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place where we shall come, say of me, he is my brother." This was false and of Satan; and proved the guilty cause of his weakness and failure again and again. But now, through mercy, the truth is told; the idol is cast out of the heart; the sin is confessed, his soul is strengthened, and he never falls into the same sin again. But, O, pause here a little, my soul, and learn a lesson so needed in the midst of present circumstances.

Mark the danger of allowing an idol a place in the heart; of maintaining a secret reserve there which is dishonouring to the Lord and ruinous to the life of faith; of acting under any guilty agreement with another, though it may have the semblance of truth, while the conscience knows that it is not perfectly right before God. There can be no real blessing, no triumphs of faith, until the evil, whatever may be its form, is judged in its very roots, openly confessed, and given up. This may be humbling work, but it must be gone through. Half measures will never do for God; He must have reality, truth in the inward parts. It was truly humbling, degrading work for Abraham, and that too in the eyes of the world. He was forced to confess his deception to Abimelech king of Gerar, and receive his rebukes. And Sarah too suffers dishonour in the sight of strangers, and is reproved by the king. "Behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other; thus she was reproved." So let Christ be a complete covering to thine eyes, the filling up, and satisfying of thy heart. Have Him only. No reserves, no compacts, no idols, have Him only as the covering of thine eyes.

But the Lord who is full of compassion and tender pity, after all this, greatly honoured His servant in the eyes of Abimelech and all his people, and in him foreshadows the exaltation of the Jew over the Gentile in the latter day, to the glory of Jehovah, the everlasting God. Chapter xxi. 22, 34.

In chapter xxii. a new scene opens to us, and a deeper character of events follow. It begins with, "And it came to pass after these things." This is

significant as to Abraham's state of soul. It was a bright moment in his history and full of meaning. The Gentile comes seeking protection of the Jew, his blessing on his family and descendants, and enters into covenant with him. The God of glory is now before the mind of Abraham. He is strong in faith giving glory to God—the Lord of heaven and earth. "And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." Here we see three things—the altar, the grove, and the well: expressive symbols of the millennial day, when Jew and Gentile will be united in peace and blessing. All is joy and happy communion with the mind of God. Ishmael is dismissed, the idol dethroned, and the house of Abraham established in the son of promise. He was now in a fit state of soul to stand the severest test that any saint of God ever passed through. But carefully note, my soul, the immediate connection between prayer and service, between communion in secret and power in public, between Abraham "calling on the name of the Lord," and his readiness to obey the call of God in offering up his son. Scarcity of bread turns him aside from the path of faith when looking to circumstances and listening to the voice of nature, but nothing turns him aside now, or causes him even to hesitate for a moment; his eye is fixed on God, the everlasting God, the God of resurrection.

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee unto the land of Moriah; and offer him there

for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went into the place of which God had told him." Never was faith put to such a test as this; but Abraham, through communion with God, is equal to the trial. He knows God, trusts in God, reckons on God, and is prepared to give up everything for Him; even his son, his only son, Isaac, the heir of promise, the one through whom all blessing was to flow both to Jew and Gentile. He rose up early in the morning; he made haste to obey; accounting that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead; from which also he had received him in a figure. (Heb. xi.) He had already received Isaac as it were from the dead, and he now lays him bound on the altar at the word of God, in the sure and certain hope that God would raise him up again. The promise was God's, that was enough for faith, though, alas! it is not always enough for the believer. Unless there be simple faith in God Himself, and obedience to His word, the believer may often fail.

But the actual moment for faith's unequalled trial has come. Draw near, my soul, and meditate on its brightest displays and its greatest triumphs. It has no parallel even in the book of God. Abraham has reached the appointed place. "Behold, the fire and the wood;" said Isaac to his father, "but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" What words were these to a father's heart? But mark the tranquil answer of faith. "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-

offering." His eye rested on God, not on his beloved Isaac. He believed God, he trusted God, all his springs were in him: this was the secret of his strength and his victories. "And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son."

The faith of Abraham is now fully proved. God is known and trusted as the God of resurrection; this was the secret of strength in the hour of trial. He could trust God with a sacrificed Isaac; knowing that all he had given up in death would be received back again in resurrection. Thus God was glorified and Abraham justified by these reckonings of faith. But our chief object in referring to this remarkable scene, is not so much the faith of the father as the death and resurrection of the son. "For though he was spared the actual death to which Abraham freely gave him up, the type of death as a sacrifice is fully carried out by the substitution of the ram caught in the thicket and slain by the father." Thus we see the deeper mysteries of the cross shadowed forth in this remarkable type; even

the love of God in the gift and in the death of His Son, for whom no ram was caught in the thicket. God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." And, oh, wondrous, precious, mysterious faith, Christ, the Fountain of life, submits to death by the puny arm He had created. But in faith He died, and gave up Himself on the cross, and all that was dear to Him, into the hands of the Father, to be received again in resurrection. And now we have in Him, as the risen Man, resurrection life, with all its untold and eternal blessedness. God so loved the world that He gave His Son, and Christ so loved the church that He gave Himself for it, so that faith can now delight itself in the fulness of divine love, and personally say, looking up to the risen Man in the glory, He loved me and gave Himself for me. The cross of Calvary and the altar of Moriah are now seen and enjoyed in the light of a risen and glorified Christ.

GLEANINGS.

WHO OUGHT TO BE HELPED. The Egyptian hieroglyphic of charity is very striking and suggestive,—a naked child, with a heart in his hand, giving honey to a bee without wings. 1. A *child*, humble and meek. (Matt. xviii. 3.) 2. With a *heart* in his hand, because the heart and the hand must go together, in helping the needy—we must be cheerful givers. 3. Giving honey to *a bee*—not a drone. 4. To a bee *without wings*—we must help such as *would* work, if they could, but are thoroughly disabled.

We inflict a serious injury upon a person when we

take him off the ground of honest industry, and make him dependent upon periodical alms. There is no bread so sweet as that which is honourably earned—no air so healthful and bracing to the moral and mental constitution as that which we inhale in the fields of honest labour. God says, "If any will not work, neither shall he eat;" and surely He is wiser and more tender than we are.

"THIS IS WHAT I WANT." A certain man on the Malabar coast had long been uneasy about his spiritual state, and had inquired of several devotees and priests how he might make atonement for his sins; and he was directed to drive iron spikes, sufficiently blunted, through his sandals; and, on these spikes, to walk a distance of about 480 miles. He undertook the journey, and travelled a long way, but could obtain no peace. One day he halted under a large, shady tree, where the gospel was sometimes preached; and while he was there, a missionary came and preached from the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) While he was preaching the poor man's attention was excited and his heart was drawn; and rising up, he threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud, "This is what I want!" and became henceforward a lively witness of the healing efficacy of the Saviour's blood. Are there not thousands throughout the length and breadth of Christendom trying to get peace by walking on iron spikes? May God lead them to rest in the precious blood of Christ!

"THIS IS THY LOVE, MY GOD."

This is thy love, my God!
Joy never-ending I in thee begin!
Thou sawest me afar from thine abode!
Thou hadst compassion! Thou hast brought me in!

It was one great surprise
Along the way, beneath that noonday sun,
Since first I falter'd forth "I will arise!"
And groan'd: "I am not fit to be a son."

Wrapt to my Father's heart—
I felt His kiss, ere I could speak my shame:
Love, acting out its own amazing part—
Me, in my guilt, my ruin, overcame.

Thou didst provide the robe!
Didst tell thy servants to bring forth the best,
The ring, the shoes, thy gift upon the road,
Prepared me, home-returning, for thy rest.

Oh, it is holy ground!
Nought that defiles can ever touch me more.
Thy lost one, once the prodigal, is *found*.
My dark distrust, the famine time is o'er.

Now is the banquet spread;
The fatted calf, reserved for me, is kill'd;
I—perishing erewhile for want of bread,
Sit at thy feast: my cup by thee o'er-fill'd.

Thy festival I share!
Where guests, at home, in all thine own delight,
With symphonies, with choral dance declare
THEE in thy grace, thy glory—LOVE and LIGHT!

H.

CORRESPONDENCE.

34. "Mary." Your communication was entirely too late for our April issue. Our reply is summed up in that pointed inquiry of the prophet, "Can two walk together unless they be agreed?" Let nothing induce you to link yourself with one who is not one with you in the things of the Lord. Think not that you will bring him to see with you after you have taken the false step. As well might you think of pulling a person out of a morass, by plunging into the morass yourself. How could you expect to set another right by going wrong yourself? Shall we do evil that good may come? We hold it to be a fatal mistake for two to come together who are not of one heart and one mind as to Christ and His cause. The papers on "Church History" and the "Lord's Coming" are, if God permit, to be published separately.

35. "A Troubled One," London. We feel persuaded you are too much occupied with your own feelings, experience, and spiritual history, instead of resting simply and absolutely on Christ's finished work, and God's faithful word. The foundation of your peace is not that you were converted when you were fourteen years of age—nor that your friends thought you converted, but that Jesus Christ once suffered for sins the just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God—that He was delivered for your offences and raised again for your justification—that He has perfectly satisfied and glorified God as to the entire question of your sins. This, beloved friend, must be the sole foundation of your peace, now and for ever. Even supposing you were deceived—which we do not at all believe—in reference to your conversion, that is no reason why you may not *now* rest on Christ for salvation and peace. You are as welcome now as ever. It is quite possible —indeed more than probable—that the work in your precious soul was but shallow at the first, and the Holy Ghost is now leading you into profounder exercises, and

more intense searchings, which shall assuredly issue in a more settled rest upon that everlasting foundation which God has laid for you, in a crucified and risen Christ. Take care how you listen to the suggestions of Satan or the reasonings of your own heart. Take God at His word. Rest in Christ and your peace shall flow as a river.

36. "C." The word of God sets forth, in the fullest and plainest manner, "what should be the conduct and general bearing of christian servants towards their employers." Thus, for example, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." (Eph. vi. 5–8.) Similar is the teaching of Colossians iii. 22–25. So also in Titus, we read, "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." We are not aware of any specific direction in scripture as to the conduct of servants toward one another; but surely the general teaching as to christian walk and character would bear upon that relationship as upon every other. If christian servants will only study their model, and seek to be formed thereon, it will regulate their conduct both towards their employers, and toward one another. We may further add, that christian employers have to look well to the manner in which they acquit themselves in their relationship; for we may rest assured that to this question, as to all others, there are two sides.

37. "W. M.," Dumfries. "Our citizenship is in heaven." "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." What has a dead man to do with politics? But the Christian is one who has died

in Christ—died to sin—died to the law—died to the world, and hence he has, in God's view of him, no more to do with these things than a man lying dead on the floor. He is alive in Christ—alive to God—alive to all that is spiritual, heavenly, divine. He is in the new creation. His morals, his religion, his politics are all in the new creation—all heavenly—all divine. He is done with the world, in spirit and principle. He is in it, to walk as a pilgrim and stranger—in it to live as a Christian—a spiritual, heavenly man; but not of it to walk as a worldly, carnal, natural man. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." May we live in the power of these things.

38. "R. S.," Glos'ter. The "other sheep" of John x. are such as are called from among the Gentiles, to form, with those of the Jewish fold, the "one flock" under the one blessed Shepherd. In Ephesians iv. we have the further truth of the "one body" composed, as we know, of Jew and Gentile, and united by the Holy Ghost, to the living Head in heaven, and to one another on the earth.

39. "J. W.," Polmont. We do not see any difficulty as to the term "children" in Ephesians vi. 1. In the entire context, the Holy Ghost is exhorting Christians, in their various relationships, to discharge the functions devolving upon them therein. None but Christians are addressed or exhorted in the epistles. Hence it follows that the "children" here addressed are Christians. Christian parents are exhorted to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This, obviously, takes in all our children whom we are to train, from the very beginning, for the Lord, counting on Him for them, and He will never fail a trusting heart. We are to take God's ground for our children, in the entire system of moral training, from their birth; and He will assuredly honour the faith that thus counts on Him for the children, and trains the children for Him. He cannot deny Himself, blessed for ever be His holy name!

JEHOVAH'S DEMAND AND SATAN'S OBJECTIONS.

PART II.

It is marvellous, and yet not marvellous, to note the way in which Satan disputes every inch of the ground, in the grand question of Israel's deliverance from the land of Egypt. He would allow them to worship *in* the land, or *near* the land; but their absolute and complete deliverance *from* the land is what he will, by every means in his power, obstinately resist.

But Jehovah, blessed be His eternal name, is above the great adversary; and He will have His people fully delivered, spite of all the powers of hell and earth combined. The divine standard can never be lowered the breadth of a hair. "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness." This is Jehovah's demand, and it must be made good, though the enemy were to offer ten thousand objections. The divine glory is intimately involved in the entire separation of Israel from Egypt, and from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." To this the enemy demurs; and to hinder it he puts forth all his malignant power, and all his crafty schemes. We have already considered two of his objections, and we shall now proceed to the third.

3. "And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh; and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our

flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord. And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones; look to it, for evil is before you. Not so; go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord, for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence." Exodus x. 8—11.

These words contain a very solemn lesson for the hearts of all christian parents. They reveal a deep and crafty purpose of the arch-enemy. If he cannot keep the parents in Egypt, he will, at least, seek to keep the children, and, in this way, mar the testimony to the truth of God, tarnish His glory in His people, and hinder their blessing in Him. Parents in the wilderness and their children in Egypt would be a terrible anomaly—a thing wholly opposed to the mind of God, and utterly subversive of His glory in the walk of His people.

We should ever remember—strange that we should ever forget!—that our children are part of ourselves. God's creative hand has made them such, and surely what the Creator has joined together the Redeemer would not put asunder. Hence we invariably find that God links a man and his house together. "Thou and thy house" is a phrase of deep practical import. It involves the very highest consequences, and conveys the richest consolation to every christian parent; and, we may truly add, the neglect of it has led to the most disastrous consequences in thousands of family circles.

Very many—alas! how many—christian parents, through an utterly false application of the doctrines of grace, have allowed their children to grow up around

them in wilfulness and worldliness; and, while so doing, they have comforted themselves with the thought that they could do nothing, and that, in God's time, their children would, if included in the eternal purpose, be gathered in. They have virtually lost sight of the grand practical truth that the One who has decreed the end has fixed the means of reaching it, and that it is the height of folly to think of gaining the end while neglecting the means.

Do we, then, mean to assert that all the children of christian parents are, of necessity, included in the number of God's elect—that they will all be infallibly saved—and that if not it is the parents' fault. We mean to assert nothing of the kind. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." We know nothing of God's eternal decrees and purposes. No mortal eye has scanned the page of His secret counsels.

What, then, is involved in the weighty expression, "Thou and thy house?" There are two things involved in it. In the first place, there is a most precious privilege; and, in the second place, a holy responsibility. It is unquestionably the privilege of all christian parents to count on God for their children; but it is also their bounden *duty*—do we dislike the homely word?—to train their children for God.

Here we have the sum and substance of the whole matter—the two sides of this great question. The word of God, in every part of it, connects a man with his house. "This day is salvation come to *this house*." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*." (Luke xix.; Acts xvi.) Here

lies the solid basis of the privilege and responsibility of parents. Acting on the weighty principle here laid down, we are at once to take God's ground for our children, and diligently bring them up for Him, counting on Him for the result. We are to begin at the very beginning, and go steadily on, from day to day, month to month, year to year, training our children for God. Just as a wise and skilful gardener begins, while his fruit trees are young and tender, to train the branches along the wall where they may catch the genial rays of the sun, so should we, while our children are young and plastic, seek to mould them for God. It would be the height of folly, on the part of the gardener, to wait till the branches become old and gnarled, and then seek to train them. He would find it a hopeless task. And most surely it is the very loftiest height of folly, on our part, to suffer our children to remain for years and years under the moulding hand of Satan, and the world, and sin, ere we rouse ourselves to the holy business of moulding them for God.

Let us not be misunderstood. Let no one suppose that we mean to teach that grace is hereditary, or that we can, by any act or system of training, make Christians of our children. Nothing is further from our thoughts. Grace is sovereign, and the children of christian parents must, like all others, be born of water and of the Spirit, ere they can see or enter the kingdom of God. All this is as plain and as clear as scripture can make it; but, on the other hand, scripture is equally clear and plain as to the duty of christian parents to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

And what does this "bringing up" involve? What does it mean? In what does it consist? These, surely, are weighty questions for the heart and conscience of every christian parent. It is to be feared that very few of us indeed really understand what christian training means, or how it is to be carried on. One thing is certain—namely, that christian training means a great deal more than drilling our children into religion, making the Bible a task book, teaching our children to repeat texts and hymns like a parrot, and turning the family circle into a school. No doubt it is very well to store the memory of a child with scripture and sweet hymns. No one would think of calling this in question. But is it not too frequently the case that religion is made a weariness to the child and the Bible a repulsive school book?

This will never do. What is really needed is to surround our children with a thoroughly christian atmosphere, from their earliest moments—to let them breathe the pure air of the new creation—to let them see in their parents the genuine fruits of spiritual life—love, peace, purity, tenderness, holy disinterestedness, genuine kindness, unselfishness, loving thoughtfulness of others. These things have a mighty moral influence upon the plastic mind of the child, and the Spirit of God will assuredly use them in drawing the heart to Christ—the centre and the source of all these beauteous graces and heavenly influences.

But, on the other hand, who can attempt to define the pernicious effect produced upon our children by our inconsistencies, by our bad temper, our selfish ways, our worldliness and covetousness? Can we be said to bring

our children out of Egypt when Egypt's principles and habits are seen in our whole career? It may be we use and teach the phraseology of the wilderness or of Canaan; but our ways, our manners, our habits are those of Egypt, and our children are quicksighted enough to mark the gross inconsistency, and the effect upon them is deplorable beyond expression. We have but little idea of the way in which the unfaithfulness of christian parents has contributed to swell the tide of infidelity which is rising around us with such appalling rapidity.

It may be said, and said with a measure of truth, that children are responsible spite of the inconsistency of their parents. But most assuredly, whatever amount of truth there may be in this statement, it is not for parents to urge it. It ill becomes us to fall back upon the responsibility of our children in view of our failure in meeting our own. They are responsible, no doubt, but so are we; and if we fail to exhibit before the eyes of our children those living and unanswerable proofs that we ourselves have left Egypt, and left it for ever, need we marvel if they remain? Of what possible use is it to talk about wilderness life, and our being in Canaan, while our manners, our habits, our ways, our deportment, our spirit, the bent of our whole life bears and exhibits the impress of Egypt? None whatever. The language of the life gives the lie to the language of the lips, and we know full well that the former is far more telling than the latter. Our children will judge from our conduct, not from our talk, where we really are; and is this to be wondered at? Is not conduct the real index of conviction? If we have really left

Egypt, it will be seen in our ways; and if it be not seen in our ways, the talk of the lips is worse than worthless; it only tends to create disgust in the minds of our children, and to lead them to the conclusion that Christianity is a mere sham.

All this is deeply solemn, and should lead christian parents into the most profound exercise of soul in the presence of God. We may depend upon it there is a great deal more involved in this question of training than many of us are aware of. Nothing but the direct power of the Spirit of God can fit parents for the great and holy work of training their children, in these days in which we live, and in the midst of the scene through which we are passing. That word falls upon the heart with heavenly sweetness and power: "My grace is sufficient for thee." We can, with fullest confidence, reckon upon God to bless the very feeblest effort to lead our dear children forth out of Egypt. But the effort must be made, and made, too, with real, fixed, earnest purpose of heart. It will not do to fold our arms and say, "Grace is not hereditary. We cannot convert our children, If they are of the number of God's elect they must be saved, if not they cannot."

All this is one-sided and utterly false. It will not stand; it cannot bear the light of the judgment-seat of Christ. Parents cannot get rid of the holy responsibility of training their children for God, that responsibility *begins with, and is based upon, the relationship*; and the right discharge of it demands continual exercise of soul before God, in reference to our children. We have to remember that the foundation of character is laid in the nursery. It is in the early days of in-

fancy that christian training begins, and it must be steadily pursued, from day to day, month to month, and year to year, in simple, hearty dependence upon God who will, most assuredly, in due time, hear and answer the earnest cry of a parent's heart, and crown, with His rich blessing, the faithful labours of a parent's hands.

And, while on this subject of training children, we would, in true brotherly love, offer a suggestion to all christian parents, as to the immense importance of inculcating a spirit of implicit obedience. If we mistake not, there is very wide-spread failure in this respect, for which we have to judge ourselves before God. Whether through a false tenderness, or indolence, we suffer our children to walk according to their own will and pleasure, and the strides which they make along this road are alarmingly rapid. They pass from stage to stage, with more than railway speed, until, at length, they reach the terrible goal of despising their parents altogether, throwing their authority entirely overboard, and trampling beneath their feet the holy order of God, and turning the domestic circle into a scene of godless misrule and confusion.

How dreadful this is we need not say, or how utterly opposed to the mind of God, as revealed in His holy word. But have we not ourselves to blame for it? God has put into the parents' hands the reins of governments, and the rod of authority, but if parents, through indolence, suffer the reins to drop from their hands; and if through false tenderness or moral weakness, the rod of authority is not applied, need we marvel, if the children grow up in utter lawlessness? How could it

be otherwise? Children are, as a rule, very much what we make them. If they are made to be obedient, they will be so; and if they are allowed to have their own way, the result will be accordingly.

Are we then to be continually chucking the reins and brandishing the rod? By no means. This would be to break the spirit of the child, instead of subduing his will. Where parental authority is thoroughly established, the reins may lie gently on the neck, and the rod be allowed to stand in the corner. The child should be taught, from his earliest hour, that the parent only wills his good, but the parent's will must be supreme. Nothing is simpler. A look is enough for a properly trained child. There is no need whatever to be continually hawking our authority; indeed nothing is more contemptible whether in a husband, a father, or a master. There is a quiet dignity about one who really possesses authority; whereas the spasmodic efforts of weakness only draw out contempt.

We have found, through many years of experience and careful observation, that the real secret of successful training lies in the proper adjustment of firmness and tenderness. If the parent, from the very beginning, establishes his authority, he may exercise as much tenderness as the most loving heart can desire or display. When the child is really made to feel that the reins and the rod are under the direct control of sound judgment and true affection, and not of a sour temper and an arbitrary will, there will be comparatively little difficulty in training him.

In a word, firmness and tenderness are the two essential ingredients in all sound education—a firmness

which the child will not dare to question—a tenderness which takes account of the child's every real want and right desire. It is a very poor affair indeed if the only idea which a child can form of parental authority be that of an arbitrary interference with his every wish, and a cold indifference to his every little want. This will never do. It is not thus that our heavenly Father deals with us; and He is to be our model in this as in all beside. If it be written, and it is written, "Children, obey your parents in all things;" it is also, in beautiful adjusting power, written, "Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged." Again, if it be said, and it is said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right;" it is also said, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In short, the child must be taught to obey; but the obedient child must be allowed to breathe an atmosphere of tenderness, and to walk up and down in the sunshine of parental affection. This is our idea of christian education.*

Most gladly would we dwell further on this great practical subject; but we trust sufficient hss been said to rouse the hearts and consciences of all christian parents to a sense of their high and holy responsibilities in reference to their beloved offspring; and also to shew that there is a great deal more involved in bringing our

* For further remarks on the deeply important subject of domestic government, the reader is referred to a small pamphlet entitled, "Thou and Thy House; or, the Christian at Home." To be had of our publisher, Mr. George Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, London, E. C.

children out of Egypt, and taking God's ground for them, than many of us are aware of. And if the reading of the foregoing lines be used of God to lead any parent into prayerful exercise in this most weighty matter, we shall not have penned them in vain.

4. We shall close this paper with the briefest possible reference to the enemy's fourth and last objection, which is embodied in the following words, "And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you." He would let them go, but without resources to serve the Lord. If he could not keep them in Egypt, he would send them away crippled and shorn. Such is the enemy's last demurrer.

But mark the noble reply of a devoted heart. It is morally grand. "And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and," ponder these suggestive words! "*we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither.*"

We must be fully and clearly on God's ground and at His stand-point, before ever we can form any true idea of the nature and extent of His claims. It is utterly impossible, while surrounded by a worldly atmosphere, and governed by a worldly spirit, worldly principles, and worldly objects to have any just sense of what is due to God. We must stand on the lofty ground of accomplished redemption—in the full orbed light of the new creation—apart from this present evil

world, ere we can properly serve Christ. It is only when, in the power of an indwelling spirit, we see where we are brought by the death and resurrection of Christ—"three days' journey"—that we can at all understand what true christian service is; and then we shall clearly see and fully own that "all we are and all we have belong to Him." "We know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." Precious words! may we better understand their force, meaning and practical application! Moses, the man of God, meets all Satan's objections by a simple but decided adherence to Jehovah's demand, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."

This is the true principle, the true method, the true course, at all times, and under all circumstances. The divine standard must be maintained in all its integrity, at all cost, and spite of all objections. If that standard be lowered, the breadth of a hair, the enemy gains his point, and christian service and testimony are wholly out of the question.

May the eternal Spirit lead our souls into the wide field of practical truth indicated by the heading of this paper, "Jehovah's demand and Satan's objections!"

"Many were the chains that bound me,
But the Lord has loosed them all:
Arms of mercy now surround me,
Favours these, nor few nor small:
Saviour, keep me!
Keep thy servant lest he fall."

MEDITATIONS ON THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

(Genesis xxii., xxiii., xxiv.)

THE promises first made to Abraham in chapter xii. are now confirmed to Isaac—the dead and risen heir—and others are added. There must always be an increase of blessing to the soul in every fresh sacrifice that we make for God. Abraham now knows God as Jehovah-jireh—the Lord will provide—which is a new ground of relationship with God in grace. And Isaac received the promise of a seed numerous as the stars of heaven. Abraham now leaves the sacred mount and returns to Beer-sheba, the well of the oath; and we will pass on to chapter xxiii.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ISRAEL.

In the opening of chap. xxiii., we are again introduced to scenes of trial, but of a wholly different character. Sarah dies, who represents the new covenant of grace, not Hagar who represents the old covenant of law, and Abraham comes before us as a mourner. "And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba, the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." But the burial of Sarah and the cave of Machpelah, with all their circumstances of sorrow, only reveal to us fresh victories of faith. And fail not to notice in passing, my soul, the *dignities* of faith before the men of the world. Abraham takes his place as "a stranger and sojourner" in the presence of the children of Heth, though he knew all the while that the whole country was his by promise; but he was a willing stranger in the land, for he desired a better country, that is an heavenly. But knowing

that his seed would yet inherit the land, he purchases with the greatest care the cave of Machpelah, that he may make it his own, and have it as his possession for a burying place: there he buried his beloved Sarah, as he had laid his Isaac on the altar, in the faith that God was able to raise up the sacred dust again. He believed in resurrection, and in God as the God of resurrection. This was the secret power of his faith as a heavenly stranger, and of his dignity before the children of this world.

But knowest thou, my soul, in thine own experience, and in the power of divine grace, what this faith is that meets with such calm dignity the ever-varying circumstances of this wilderness life? The subject well deserves thy deepest meditations. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Strictly speaking, faith cannot be overcome, it always overcomes —simply because it reckons on God Himself, and trusts to His word, which only governs faith. But the believer, alas, is not always governed by God's word, and therefore he is often overcome by his circumstances in place of overcoming them. When Abraham looked at Sarah and Abimelech and allowed his fears—or rather the suggestions of Satan—to govern him, he sorrowfully failed; but when he was looking to God Himself, and his heart resting on His sure word, we see him rising above, and quietly overcoming one circumstance after another just as they come before him. It must be always so; Ai was too many for Joshua and the armies of Israel without God; but what was Jericho with its high walls and barred gates to faith? Peter could no more walk on smooth water than rough with-

out faith; had the Lord stilled the waves he would have sunk all the same; but had Peter kept his eye fixed on the person of Christ, and His gracious word, "Come" fixed in his heart, he could have walked on the roughest sea as on dry land.

This is a great subject, rest assured, my soul, dismiss it not hurriedly; but see thou and fully comprehend it and firmly hold it. Thou art never right or safe, as a heavenly stranger in this world, except on the ground of faith. This is a dry and thirsty land where no water is, and thou hast to bear in mind that all thy fresh springs are in the living God. The Son of man—the Lord from heaven, found it so, and thou art to walk even as He walked. God is honoured with thy confidence when every channel of relief appears to be entirely cut off. He can form new channels, both deeper and broader than any which thou hast heretofore known. Let God Himself, then I pray thee, be thy confidence—God in Christ Jesus as thou knowest Him—and let His word govern thy every thought, feeling, and action. "Them that honour me I will honour," saith the Lord, and "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." 1 Samuel ii. 30; Psalm ii. 12.

But are not all Christians, thou mayest inquire, well acquainted with the nature and power of faith? Was not our whole personal condition as lost sinners fully met by faith at the beginning of our path as Christians? Most surely it was, and no greater victory than this can ever be gained all thy journey through. We then entered into the complete victories of Christ, and shared with Him the spoils of redemption. And were we duly to consider this—the greatest of all deliverances

—we should never be overwhelmed by the difficulties of the way. But are there not many who have faith in Christ for the pardon of their sins and the salvation of their souls, who know nothing of the *path* of faith? True, alas, most true; but such have never entered into the blessings of grace at their conversion. They know not the completeness of redemption, their standing in Christ—the risen man in glory; or the path of faith which becomes their high calling. We know by the word of God that we have been delivered from sin and all its direful consequences; that we have been introduced to a new state altogether in the risen Jesus, beyond death and judgment; that we have peace with God, and acceptance in the Beloved. These are, after all, the mightiest conquests of grace through faith, and surely with these we are most familiar. "Faith," says one, "which has done its first work has done its greatest work. 'If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.' It is the power of life over death, life in victory, that faith uses. It was such power of victorious life that Abraham possessed himself of by faith. The sepulchre is empty, and the grave clothes are lying there, as the spoils of war. The deadness of His own body, the altar of his Isaac, and the grave of his Sarah, were visited and inspected by a *risen* man, in the light of the faith of Him who is the quickener of the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were."*

We now return to our chapter. The death of Sarah

* "History of Abraham." By J. G. B.

represents the disappearing of Israel after the preaching of Peter at Pentecost. He stood up before the men of Israel, the children of the covenant which God made with their fathers, and boldly testified of the death and resurrection of Christ, the true Isaac, but they would not hearken, they rejected the testimony, their unbelief was complete, and, consequently, Israel disapppears for a time because of their persistent unbelief; but in the latter day—after the church is caught up—when God works again in His Jewish people, the new covenant will reappear, and be established for ever in the Sarah line of promise. Thus the death of Sarah, the mother, Israel, makes way for Rebekah, the son's bride, the church. Acts i.–vii.; Galatians iv. 22–31.

In chapter xxiv., we find ourselves on entirely new ground. Covenant dealings and covenant blessing are for the moment set aside. One who has not been heard of before now appears before us, and becomes the most prominent person in the scene. The call and exaltation of Rebekah are the grand points in our chapter, but every circumstance and event connected therewith are full of interest, and throw their reflective light on our present position, and the ways of God in grace, "who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." 1 Peter v. 10.

A new purpose of the father's heart is revealed, and his faithful servant, Eliezer, must go down to Mesopotamia, under the solemnity of an oath, to seek a bride for his son. This is full of meaning as immediately following the sacrifice of Moriah and the burial of Sarah. Typically, we have the death of Christ, the passing away of Israel, the calling out of the church by the

Holy Ghost to occupy the new and exalted position of the bride of the Lamb.

We will now examine some of the details of this interesting and instructive chapter. Four, especially, amidst its many mysteries and beauties, thou wilt do well most carefully to consider. 1. The purpose of Abraham. 2. The position of Isaac. 3. The mission of Eliezer. 4. The call and character of Rebekah.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

THERE can be no question as to the application of the familiar type of the brazen serpent. The Lord Himself has explained its import in His memorable words to Nicodemus, and thus precluded all mere effort of imagination. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here lies our warrant for applying this striking ordinance to our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; let us make use of it, for a few moments, as we glance at a passage in chapter xxi. of the book of Numbers.

"And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread."

Only think of this, reader. Here is a picture of the human heart—a picture of your heart and mine. "They spake against God." This is what we always do, whenever we grumble and complain of our circumstances. It was all about "bread and water"—"eating

and drinking." They imagined that God had brought them out of Egypt to die, whereas, in point of fact, He had delivered them from the brick-kilns and task-masters, in order that they might hold a feast to Him in the wilderness.

Thus it was the very reverse of what they said; and so it is ever, with our unbelieving hearts when we listen to them. They are sure to tell the most palpable lies —lies, too, of the gravest character—lies about God—about His character—His nature—His dealings—His ways. All complaints as to our circumstances are lies about God.

And whence do they come? From the father of lies—the old serpent the devil—from the same one who entered the garden of Eden and made our first parents discontented with their circumstances—made them believe that God was not kind—that they were not as well off as they might be, and as they ought to be. The serpent spake against God. This is what he always has done—always does—always will do.

Let us remember this. Let us never forget that all murmuring and complaining is really speaking against God. It is the voice of the serpent through human lips. He first thrusts the sting of discontent into the heart; and then the accents of discontent are poured from the lips. We speak against God.

Mark the result in Israel's case. "And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." This was a practical lesson for their hearts. They had listened to the serpent's voice, and they must be allowed to feel the serpent's bite. It is a solemn thing to grumble

about our circumstances. It is, in point of fact, accusing God. It is simply saying we are not happy in His hands; and if we are not happy there, where else can we be placed but in the hands of the serpent? There is no neutral ground. If we are not satisfied with God's treatment, we must be left to taste the treatment of the serpent.

Let us deeply ponder this. It is a very serious thing to indulge in a spirit of fretfulness, murmuring and discontent. It is really wounding the heart of God and playing into the hands of the serpent. This is a terrible sin and must, assuredly, lead to bitter consequences. Let us carefully guard against it. Let us cultivate a grateful, happy, contented spirit—a mind sweetly submissive—a heart blessedly subject. Let us seek to meet all that comes with an "Even so, Father." Thus will the serpent be completely foiled and God will be glorified.

But to return to the camp of Israel—

"Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people."

Here they take their right place—the place of confession—the place of self-judgment. This is the *only* true ground for a sinner. They had spoken against God; now they speak against themselves. This is *right*—*right* always—*right* for *each*—*right* for *all*. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Precious, eternal, sovereign grace! All praise to Him who is, at

once, the source, the channel, and the power thereof—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, *when he looketh upon it, shall live.* And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."

Here the divine remedy is introduced—"A serpent of brass;" the very likeness of that which had done the mischief becomes, under the hand of God, the means of deliverance. The fiery serpents are not removed; nay they are still allowed to do their terrible work; but grace shines in the provision, and the bitten Israelite who looked thereon was better off by far than if he had never been bitten at all.

True, he had to taste the bitterness of sin; but he was also enabled to prove the sweetness of that grace which could bring life out of death, and give full victory over all the serpent's power. "Sin hath reigned unto death;" but, blessed be God, "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." And hence in a world of sin, and a world of sinners, where the serpent's power is seen on every hand, and where death reigns, the poor bitten sinner may *look* to the Great Antitype of the brazen serpent—to that blessed Christ who was lifted up upon the cross for us—made a curse—made sin—bruised and judged in our stead; and by a simple look—one look—a look of faith at Him, get eternal life. "There is life in a look at the crucified One."

Yes, dear reader, here lies the deep and precious secret of life and salvation. It is all had by a simple look at the divine object. When the bitten Israelite beheld the serpent of brass he lived. He looked and lived. He looked, not at himself, not at his wound, but at the divine provision.

This was the grand point to get hold of. It was of no possible use to look at himself. He could see nothing there but a bitten, wounded, dying creature. He might try to heal his wound—he might fondly dream of getting better, and then and thus think of looking. He might reason as to the use of looking at yonder serpent of brass; he might wonder what good could be had by simply looking. But it was all vain—utterly vain. There was but the one way of life, and that was divine and perfect—it was one look of faith at God's remedy. Till that look was given, nothing was done. When it was given, nothing was wanting. The moment anyone looked he lived, and then he could, without a shadow of fear, see the fiery serpents flying around him, and know their power to hurt him was gone. One believing look settled the whole question.

But each one had to look, and to look for himself. No one could look for another—none could look by proxy. It was an intensely individual thing. Every bitten one *might* look. His title to look was his being bitten. But he had to look in order to live. He was "*shut up*" to God's remedy—shut up to faith.

Thus it was with the dying Israelite in the camp of old; and thus it is with the dying sinner now. The Son of man has been lifted up on the cross—God's grand provision—His only remedy. Every soul who

feels his need is welcome to look—"whosoever will"—none is shut out; all are welcome. But each *must* look or perish. There is no middle ground. Look and live—look or die. One look is enough; no need of a second. The moment a soul looks by faith to Jesus, he passes from death to life—life everlasting. "The Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have eternal life."

Glorious tidings! Heavenly news! Precious message! May many ears be opened to hear, many hearts to understand, many eyes to give that one life-look!

Reader, What say you to these things? Have you found out that you are a poor, bitten, wounded, dying, hell-deserving sinner? Has the Eternal Spirit opened your eyes to see your true condition? Have you been thoroughly roused to a sense of your guilt and danger? If so, Why not now—even this moment—look to Jesus? Perhaps you feel disposed to say, "How am I to look? I do not know what is meant by looking." Suppose you have a heavy bill to meet, on the fourth of next month, and you have no provision, but a very kind and wealthy friend were to say to you, "Do not be uneasy, look to me for the means to meet your bill;" would you not understand this?

Doubtless you would. Well this is but a very feeble illustration of the meaning of looking to Christ. It is to confide in Him, to rest in Him, to believe that He has met your case, that He has satisfied the claims of God on your behalf—put away your sins—cancelled your guilt, and brought you nigh to God in all His own infinite acceptance. There is eternal life and salvation, divine righteousness and everlasting glory—all in one

believing look at the Christ who was nailed to the tree, and is now crowned on the throne. May the Holy Ghost lead you now to give that one momentous, life-giving, peace-giving look.

POSTSCRIPT. Ere closing this paper, we would ask the christian reader to turn to 2 Kings xviii. 4, and read the following words: "He [Hezekiah] removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, *and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto these days the children of Israel did burn incense to it:* and he called it Nehushtan" (a piece of brass).

Thus, in Numbers xxi., we have the serpent of brass as God's provision to meet man's need. But in 2 Kings xviii., we have the same serpent of brass as the idol of man's heart to shut God out. And does not this remind us of the use which Christendom has made of the cross? Losing sight of the One who was nailed to the wood, she worships the wood to which He was nailed!

GLEANINGS.

"FAITH," says Archdeacon Law, "is the brightest star in the firmament of grace. High is its origin—for it is born in heaven. Lowly is its abode—for it dwells on earth in the hearts of the redeemed. Mighty are its deeds—for it prevails with God, and over sin and Satan. It treads down seeming impossibilities. It strides to victory over mountains of stupendous hindrance. It speeds to its haven through oceans, in which each billow is an overwhelming difficulty. It braces the christian warrior for every combat, giving a shield to screen, and a sword to subdue. It has a keen

eye to discern things invisible. It reads the mind of God, as written in the tablets of eternity—as emblazoned on the cross of Christ—as wrapped up in the folds of providence. It enthrones Jesus, as king of the inner man. It kindles and fans the flame of love. It opens the lips of prayer and praise. It turns the current of life into a strong stream of spiritual service. It endures until the gates of light open at its touch. It only expires, when it sees the Lord face to face."

God's sovereign will to do anything is enough for the creature to bow to. That sovereign *will*, will always be consistent with His own nature. Confidence in God's character quiets my soul. *Reasoning* gives me no comfort about anything—*Believing* does.

Those who know heaven to be their home can look upon all things now as a stepping-stone helping them on up there.

It was the beautiful reply of a child when asked "What is faith?" and she answered, "Doing God's *will*, and *asking no* questions."

"Faith is the soul's *outward* not *inward* look. The object on which faith fixes its eye is not the heart's *ever-varying* frames, but the *never*-varying Christ."

Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as "I imagine so," or "It is likely"—but the cable, the strong rope, of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity; our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, and Christ's own strength, to the strong stake of God's unchangeable nature.—*Rutherford.*

"MY FATHER'S HOUSE."

Oh what a home! The Father's house,
  There love divine doth rest;
No other spot can hold the hearts
  Of those by Jesus blest.
His home made ours—His Father's love
  Our hearts full portion given—
The portion of the only Son,
  The great delight of heaven.

Oh what a home! The Father knows—
  And only He—the Son:
The Son well knows the Father too,
  His well-beloved One:
Dwells in His bosom—knoweth all
  That in that bosom lies,
And came to earth to make it known,
  That we might share His joys.

Oh what a home! Love upon love
  Re-echoing through its breadth;
The Son's divine affections flow
  Throughout its height and depth.
And full response the Father gives,
  Heart answering to heart,
And not a cloud to cross the scene,
  A shadow to impart.

Oh what a home! but such His love
  That He must fetch us there
To fill that home, to be with Him,
  And all His glory share.
The Father's house, the Father's heart,
  All that the Son is given,
Made ours—the objects of His love—
  And He, our joy of heaven.

CORRESPONDENCE.

40. "L. E. D.," Gravesend. Accept our warmest thanks for your most delightful letter. It has greatly refreshed and encouraged us. May the dear Lord abundantly bless you!

41. "H. G. B.," London. An intelligent worshipper will always address God in the character and by the name in which He is pleased to reveal Himself. His name to us is "Father." True, the One who is our Father was and is "the God of Jacob," "the Almighty God," "Jehovah;" but to us He is Father. Precious title! May we ever live in the sunlight of His countenance!

42. "E. S.," Brixton Hill. 1 Peter ii. 12 teaches us that, however worldly people may speak against the children of God, yet when any trouble comes upon them—any "visitation" from the hand of God, they will glorify Him by turning for help and sympathy to the very persons whom they once despised.

43. "J. J.," Montreal. "The Lord's body," in 1 Corinthians xi. 29, is His body given for us. This some of the Christians at Corinth failed to discern.

44. "J. L. M.," Leeds. We believe the word of God and the living example of our Lord Jesus Christ both teach us that, when called upon by a judge or a magistrate, we should give evidence on oath. (Lev. v. 1; Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.) The expression "Swear not at all" refers, we believe, to our ordinary intercourse. But of course each one must act in this matter according to his light.

45. "E. W.," Folkestone. We regret not being able to give you the desired information. You might write to our publisher.

46. "H. S.," Regent's Park. "Born of water" refers to the word of God. Compare 1 Peter i. 23; James i. 18. You will find "A letter to a friend on Hebrews vi." in our fourth volume, page 25.

47. "R. H.," Linlithgow. The cases of Achan and

Ananias and Sapphira are clearly distinguished from the others which you name, by the fact that theirs was sin affecting the assembly—the place of God's presence. They were ostensibly members of the congregation of God, in recognized relationship with Him. Compare 1 Peter iv. 17.

48. "W. T. G." Your question is hardly in our line. As to the general principle, it is very plain that the Lord's table is spread on the ground of the one body. But, as you say, in days like these, there is great need of holy caution and prayerful waiting on God for guidance in each case as it arises.

49. "Scholar." The term "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are sometimes, not always, interchangeable. The context will fix the import in each instance.

50. "J. L.," Holt. Your letter has come to hand. We do not feel called of God to take up the subject to which you refer.

51. "Alise." There are thousands of quickened souls who have not found in Christ a satisfying portion for their hearts. This is what is meant by the expression to which you call our attention. Jesus says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." Now, if a person has not rest, how can he be said to have really come to Jesus? What we understand by *coming* to Jesus is, finding in Him a perfect covering for the eyes, and a satisfying portion for the heart. How very few, comparatively, even of God's dear children, know the deep blessedness of this. They are occupied with themselves, and reasoning on what they find there, instead of simply resting in Christ. The grand cure for a legal mind, a morbid conscience, and a self-occupied heart, is to have a full Christ before us. His work for the conscience—His person for the heart—His word for the path. May all God's dear people know the reality and power of these things! We believe most surely that herein lies the grand secret of peace and progress in these days of *unrest* and *unreality*.

"THE MAN OF GOD."

THE sentence which we have just penned occurs in Paul's second Epistle to his beloved son Timothy—an epistle marked, as we know, by intense individuality. All thoughtful students of scripture have noticed the striking contrast between the two Epistles of Paul to Timothy. In the first, the church is presented in its order, and Timothy is instructed as to how he is to behave himself therein. In the second, on the contrary, the church is presented in its ruin. The house of God has become the great house, in the which there are vessels to dishonour as well as vessels to honour; and where, moreover, errors and evils abound—heretical teachers and false professors, on every hand.

Here, then, it is, in this epistle of individuality, that the expression, "The man of God" is used with such obvious force and meaning. It is in times of general ruin, failure, declension, and confusion that the faithfulness, devotedness, and decision of the individual man of God are specially called for. And it is a signal mercy for such an one to know that, spite of the hopeless failure of the church, as a responsible witness for Christ, on this earth, it is the privilege of the individual to tread as lofty a path, to taste as deep communion, and to enjoy as rich blessings, as ever were, or could be known, in the church's brightest and palmiest days.

This is a most encouraging and consolatory fact—a fact established by many infallible proofs, and set forth in the very passage from which our heading is taken; and which we shall here quote, at length, for the reader—a passage of singular weight and power.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect*, thoroughly *furnished to all good works*."* 2 Timothy iii. 17.

Here we have "the man of God," in the midst of all the ruin and confusion, the hereses and moral pravities of the last days, standing forth in his own distinct individuality, "perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And, may we not ask, what more could be said in the church's brightest days? If we go back to the day of pentecost itself, with all its display of power and glory, have we anything higher, or better, or more solid than that which is set forth in the words "perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good work?"

And is it not a signal mercy for anyone who desires to stand for God, in a dark and evil day, to be told that, spite of all the darkness, all the evil, all the error and confusion, he possesses that which can make a child

* The reader should be informed that the word which is rendered "perfect," in the above passage, occurs but this once in the entire New Testament. It is ἄρτιος (artios) and signifies ready, complete, well fitted, as an instrument with all its strings, a machine with all its parts, a body with all its limbs, joints, muscles, and sinews. The usual word for "perfect" is τέλειος (teleios) which signifies the reaching of the moral *end*, in any particular thing.

wise unto salvation, and make a man *perfect* and thoroughly furnished unto all good works? Assuredly it is; and we have to praise our God for it, with full and overflowing hearts. To have access, in days like these, to the eternal fountain of inspiration, where the child and the man can meet and drink and be satisfied —that fountain so clear that you cannot see its depth, and so deep that you cannot reach the bottom—that peerless priceless volume which meets the child at his mother's knee, and makes him wise unto salvation; and meets the man in the most advanced stage of his practical career and makes him perfect and fully furnished for exigence of every hour.

However, we shall have occasion, ere we close this paper, to look, more particularly, at "the man of God," and to consider what is the special force and meaning of this term. That there is very much more involved in it than is ordinarily understood, we are most fully persuaded.

There are three aspects in which man is presented in scripture; in the first place, we have *man in nature;* secondly, *a man in Christ*; and, thirdly, we have, *the man of God.* It might perhaps be thought that the second and third are synonymous; but we shall find a very material difference between them. True, I must be a man in Christ before I can be a man of God; but they are, by no means, interchangeable terms.

Let us then, in the first place, contemplate

MAN IN NATURE.

This is a very comprehensive phrase indeed. Under this title, we shall find every possible shade of character,

temperament and disposition. Man, on the platform of nature, graduates between two extremes. You may view him at the very highest point of cultivation, or at the very lowest point of degradation. You may see him surrounded with all the advantages, the refinements and the so-called dignities of civilized life; or you may find him sunk in all the shameless and barbarous customs of savage existence. You may view him in the almost numberless grades, ranks, classes, and *castes* into which the human family has distributed itself.

Then again, in the self-same class or caste, you will find the most vivid contrasts, in the way of character, temper and disposition. There, for example, is a man of such an atrocious temper that he is the very horror of every one who knows him. He is the plague of his family circle, and a perfect nuisance to society. He can only be compared to a porcupine with all his quills perpetually up; and if you meet him once you will never wish to meet him again. There, on the other hand, is a man of the sweetest disposition and most amiable temper. He is just as attractive as the other is repulsive. He is a tender, loving, faithful husband; a kind, affectionate, considerate father; a thoughtful liberal master; a kindly, genial neighbour; a generous friend, beloved by all, and justly so; the more you know him the more you must like him, and if you meet him once you are sure to wish to meet him again.

Further, you may meet on the platform of nature, a man who is false and deceitful, to the very heart's core. He delights in lying, cheating and deception. Even where there is no object to be gained or interest to be served, he would rather tell a lie than the truth. He

is mean and contemptible in all his thoughts, words, and ways; a man to whom all who know him would like to give as wide a berth as possible. And, on the other hand, you may meet a man of high principle, frank, honourable, generous, and upright; one who would scorn to tell a lie, or do a mean action, whose reputation is unblemished—his character unexceptionable. His word would be taken for any amount; he is one with whom all who know him would be glad to have dealings; an almost perfect natural character; a man of whom it might be said, he lacks but one thing.

Finally, as you pass to and fro on nature's platform, you may meet the atheist who affects to deny the existence of God; the infidel who denies God's revelation; the sceptic and the rationalist who disbelieves everything. And, on the other hand, you will meet the superstitious devotee who spends his time in prayers and fastings, ordinances, and ceremonies; and who feels sure he is earning a place in heaven by a wearisome round of religious observances that actually unfit him for the proper functions and responsibilities of domestic and social life. You may meet men of every imaginable shade of religious opinion, high church, low church, broad church, and no church; men who, without a spark of divine life in their souls, are contending for the powerless forms of a traditionary religion.

Now, there is one grand and awfully solemn fact common to all these various classes, castes, grades, shades, and conditions of men who occupy the platform of nature, and that is there is not so much as a single link between them and heaven—there is no link with the Man who sits at the right hand of God—no link

with the new creation. They are without Christ and without hope. They are unconverted. They have not gotten eternal life. As regards God, and Christ, and eternal life, and heaven, they all—however they may differ, morally, socially, and religiously—stand on one common ground; they are far from God—they are out of Christ—they are in their sins—they are in the flesh—they are of the world—they are on their way to hell.

This being the case, it follows as a necessary and terrible consequence, that, underneath the platform of nature, and right in front of all who stand thereon, there are the flames of an everlasting hell. There is really no getting over this, if we are to listen to the voice of holy scripture. False teachers may deny it. Infidels may pretend to smile contemptuously at the idea; but scripture is plain—as plain as plainness itself. It speaks, in manifold places, of a fire that NEVER shall be quenched, and of a worm that shall never die.

It is the very height of folly for any one to seek to set aside the plain testimony of the word of God on this most solemn and weighty subject. Better far to let that testimony fall, with all its weight and authority, upon the heart and conscience—infinitely better to flee from the wrath to come than to attempt to deny that it is coming, and that, when it does come, it will abide for ever—yes; for ever, and for ever, and for ever! Tremendous thought!—overwhelming consideration! May it speak, with living power, to the soul of the unconverted reader, leading him to cry out, in all sincerity, "What is to be done?"

Yes, here is the question, "What must I do to be

saved?" The divine answer is wrapped up in the following words which dropped from the lips of two of Christ's very highest and most gifted ambassadors. "Repent and be converted," said Peter to the Jew. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house," said Paul to the Gentile. And again, the latter of these two blessed messengers, in summing up his own ministry, thus defines the whole matter, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

How simple! But how real! How deep! How thoroughly practical! It is not a nominal, national, head belief. It is not saying, in mere flippant profession, "I believe." Ah! no; it is something far deeper and more serious than this. It is much to be feared that a large amount of the professed faith of this our day is deplorably superficial. There are vast numbers of those who throng our preaching rooms and lecture halls who are, after all, but wayside and stony ground hearers. The plough has never passed over them. The fallow ground has never been broken up. The arrow of conviction has never pierced them through and through. They have never been smashed to pieces—turned inside out—thoroughly revolutionized. The preaching of the gospel to all such is just like scattering precious seed on the hard asphalte, the pavement, or the beaten highway. It never penetrates. It does not enter into the depths of the soul; the conscience is not reached; the heart is not affected. The seed lies on the surface and is carried away by the first passing breeze.

Nor is this all. It is also much to be feared that many of the preachers of the present day, in their efforts to make the gospel simple, lose sight of the eternal necessity of repentance, and the essential necessity of the action of the Holy Ghost, without which so-called faith is a mere human exercise and passes away like the vapours of the morning, leaving the soul still in the region of nature, satisfied with itself, daubed with the untempered mortar of a merely human gospel that cries peace, peace where there is no peace, but the most imminent danger.

All this is very serious, and should lead the soul into profound exercise. We want the reader to give it his grave and immediate consideration. We would put this pointed question to him, which we entreat him to answer, now, "*Have you got eternal life?*" Say, dear friend, have you? "He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life." Grand reality! If you have not got this, you have nothing. You are still on that platform of nature of which we have spoken so much. Yes, you are still there, no matter though you were the very fairest specimen to be found there—amiable, polished, affable, frank, generous, truthful, upright, honourable, attractive, beloved, learned, cultivated, and even pious after a merely human fashion. You may be all this, and yet not have a single pulsation of eternal life in your soul.

This may sound harsh, stern, and severe. But it is true; and you will find out its truth sooner or later. We want you to find it out now. We want you to see that you are a thorough bankrupt, in the fullest sense of that word. A deed of bankruptcy has been filed

against you in the high court of heaven. Here are its terms, "*They that are in the flesh cannot please God.*" Have you ever pondered these words? Have you ever seen their application to yourself. So long as you are unrepentant, unconverted, unbelieving, you cannot do a single thing to please God—not one. "In the flesh" and "on the platform of nature" mean one and the same thing; and so long as you are there and thus, you cannot please God. "You must be born again"—renewed in the very deepest springs of your being, unrenewed nature is wholly unable to see and unfit to enter the kingdom of God. You must be born of water and of the Spirit—that is by the living word of God, and of the Holy Ghost. There is no other way by which to enter the kingdom. It is not by self-improvement but by new birth, we reach the blessed kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and "the flesh profiteth nothing" for "they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

How distinct is all this! How pointed! How full! How personal! How earnestly we desire that the unawakened or undecided reader should, just now, take it home to himself, as though he were the only individual upon the face of the earth. It will not do to generalize—to rest satisfied with saying, "We are all sinners." No; it is an intensely individual matter. "You *must* be born again." If you again ask, "How?" hear the divine response from the lips of the Master Himself, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Here is the sovereign remedy, for every poor broken-hearted, conscience-smitten, hopelessly ruined, hell-deserving sinner—for every one who owns himself lost —who confesses his sins, and judges himself—for every weary, heavy laden, sin-burdened soul—here is God's own blessed promise. Jesus died, that you might live. He was condemned, that you might be justified. He drank the cup of wrath, that you might drink the cup of salvation. Behold Him hanging on yonder cross for thee. See what He did for thee. Believe that He satisfied, on your behalf, *all* the claims—the infinite and everlasting claims of the throne of God. See all your sins laid on Him—your guilt imputed to Him—your entire condition represented and disposed of by Him. See His atoning death answering perfectly for all that was or ever could be brought against you. See Him rising from the dead, having accomplished all. See Him ascending into the heavens, bearing in His divine Person the marks of His finished atonement. See Him seated on the throne of God, in the very highest place of power. See Him crowned with glory and honour. Believe in Him there, and you will receive the gift of eternal life—the seal of the Holy Ghost —the earnest of the inheritance. You will pass off the platform of nature—you will be "*A man in Christ.*"

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

"PRAISE ye the Father! God—'tis He who gave us
In full and perfect love, His only Son;
Praise ye the Christ, who died from guilt to save us,
And by the Spirit quicken'd us each one."

A TOUCHING INCIDENT.

How often we may learn a most valuable lesson from some trifling incident of daily life! We remember, once, a dear, loving, charming little boy who was in the constant habit of coming to his father's study whenever he wanted anything. If he wanted his ball settled, or his pencil pared, or a sheet of paper, or a picture book, his little gentle tap was sure to be heard at the study door.

The father always attended to his little boy. Come when or with what he might, he was always sure to find a willing ear and a ready hand. The father acted thus not merely from affection—though there was deep, true, and strong affection—but from principle. He felt that his child should ever find in the parent what he could not find in anyone else; nor could he endure the thought of sternly repulsing the precious little boy, and compelling him to have recourse to hirelings or strangers to meet his little wants. He felt it to be his sweet and sacred duty to attend to his child.

And the father was right. We little know what mischief arises from the habit of leaving children with unconverted, unprincipled, godless servants who constantly take delight in corrupting their young minds and polluting their imaginations. Many a one has had to groan, all his days, over the effects of scenes witnessed in childhood, through the culpable carelessness and indolence of parents, who, instead of seeking to keep their children within the moral shelter of their own presence, left them with servants who not only

neglected them but took pains to teach them wickedness and folly.

Yes; many a christian parent has grievously erred and failed in this matter, and that, too, very often under the plea of going to meetings, or going out in so-called service. The children have been entirely neglected; and the enemy has taken occasion to make impressions upon their tender plastic minds, to instil corrupt principles, and to teach them words and ways of wickedness that adhere to them all their days.

This is very serious, and it claims the attention of all christian parents. We must remember that, as parents, we have a duty to discharge to our children which cannot possibly be neglected with impunity. Whatever else we neglect, we must not neglect them. We do not refer now to their mere wants, but to their minds, their morals, their immortal souls. Attention to their wants is only a part of the moral training; and it is important that parents should ever shew themselves attentive to the real wants of their children, so that they may have no occasion to seek for sympathy or succour elsewhere.

No doubt, it will form a part of proper moral training to teach the children not to be inconsiderate, or self-occupied; but to think of others, to find delight in serving others, in every possible way. All this is most fully admitted, and is strongly insisted upon; but it leaves wholly untouched the duty of parents to bind their precious children to them by a loving and thoughtful attention to all their little wants, and cares, and sorrows.

But to return to our incident.

As we have said, our dear little boy was continually in the habit of coming to his father whenever he wanted anything, and the father was careful not to repulse him however he might be occupied.

Well, then, it happened, one day, that the father was engaged in his study, when he heard the well-known tap at the door. "Come in," he said, and the child entered. "Well, my little man, what do you want now?" "Notin' papa; I only 'ant to be wit' 'ou." And he made his way to a corner of the room and remained quietly alone with his father.

This was a very simple incident indeed; but it taught that father a lesson which he has never forgotten. The lesson is this. Do we ever go to our Father when we do not want anything? Do we go to Him simply for the pleasure of being alone with Him? We go to Him with our wants; and we do well. He would have us to do so. He invites and exhorts us to go to Him with all our wants, all our cares, and all our sorrows, and He never repulses us—never, no never. He never reproves us for coming too often—never says, "Go away, I cannot attend to you now." He may at times keep us waiting—at times withhold things which we ask because He knows they would be bad for us, but He never sends us away from His dear presence. He loves to have us near Him. He delights to hear us telling out all our need, all our weakness, all our exercises, into His gracious and ever open ear.

All this is so of a truth; but do we ever go and tell the Lord that we do not want anything but only to be near Him? Do we ever go and lie at His feet in the calm satisfied condition of one who finds all the deep

longings of the soul met in the simple fact of being *near Him?*

Oh! that it may be so, more and more, and then a little of the creature will go a great way with the heart. We shall be very independent of creature streams if we abide near to that ever-gushing Fountain; and not only independent of others, but a channel of blessing ourselves.

MEDITATIONS ON THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

(Genesis xxii., xxiii., xxiv.)

THE PURPOSE OF ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM, now old and well-stricken in age, is here seen in the full intelligence and power of his position and character as a man of God—as God's man in that place. All he says and does proves this. He had the mind of God. But how beautiful to see an aged pilgrim, fresh, as it were, in his first love. The sight arrests the heart and invites us to linger over it for a moment. He had left country, kindred, and his father's house; he had come to Canaan, but the Canaanites were there; enemies were all around; he was a stranger and a sojourner with his tent and his altar in the promised land.

Nevertheless, the land was his, the call of God was his, the promise of God was his; and these divine realities dwelling in his heart by faith, gave him to order his house according to the mind of God, and to walk before the people of the land in true moral dignity and becoming independence. Note, in passing, I pray

thee, my soul, the importance of this subject in a christian point of view; I mean the *call of God;* of the heart and life answering to His call. It is only in the proportion that we are under the power of His call that we can take our place in this world as pilgrims and strangers; that we can be content with the promise of God when present things are all against us; that we can walk here as God's hidden ones until Christ come. We know that we have all things in Christ, but the call of God separates us from this present evil world, even as Christ is separate from it. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." . . . . "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us." John xvii. 16; 2 Corinthians i. 20.

But this is a subject little thought of by Christians generally. It is so painful to nature, so difficult to obey, that we willingly forget that we are under such a call, and feel in nowise bound to obey it. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred," said the God of glory to our father Abraham, when he dwelt in Mesopotamia. This was separating work; but the call of God is as absolute now as then; the authority of His word is the same. It strikes at the very root of all that we hold dear naturally. Old and early associations must be given up, or rather left behind. Self must be denied, the voice of God must be followed. And when this is faithfully done, we shall find many of our old associates in nature, in the world, and even in the professing church, ready enough to separate from us, and that with no small feeling of bitterness and opposition. And we may have to pass through many a struggle

before we can feel reconciled to all this, or before the authority of God's word is established in the heart. Still, God will wait for us. He waited a long time before Abraham was right in heart, but He must have us so, sooner or later.

"Whosoever he be of you," saith the blessed Lord, "that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." And again, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 26, 33.) These terms of discipleship have often been spoken of as extremely hard and most obscure in their meaning. The passage certainly does not mean that we are to hate our kindred as the natural heart hates; on the contrary, we will love them more keenly and more tenderly than ever. "Without natural affection," is a feature of the apostasy. But the teaching of the Lord does mean, that we must deny self, take up His cross, and follow Him so fully, that to others it would seem that we were neglecting the nearest and strongest claims of kindred. But this may be a greater trial to the one who is following Christ, than to those who are left behind. The ties that would hinder us from following Him must be broken. If Terah hinders Abraham from entering the land, Terah must die at Haran. (Gen. xi. 32.) We must acknowledge grace to be stronger than nature. "Come unto me" . . . "Follow me" . . . "Abide in me," are the Lord's own words and clearly teach, that it is not enough to *come* to Him at first, but that we must *follow* Him day by day, and also *abide* in Him as our exalted Head in heaven. He is the measure of our

separation from the world by faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But rather, I would say, before leaving this practical point, let thy thoughts dwell on what thou hast *gained*, not on what thou hast *given up*. Let all *that* be left behind as unworthy of thy regret. (Phil. iii. 4—10.) The apostle, in writing to the saints at Ephesus, prays, "that ye may know what is the hope of *his calling*, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Nothing less than "the riches of the glory of his inheritance," is what thou art called to, and nothing less would suit thy calling. Surely there is enough here to attract the eye and the heart to heaven, and to draw them away from the things of earth; besides, we must not forget that the moral dignity and honour in being the heirs of such an inheritance, should lead us to walk in marked separation from the lowering and defiling things of earth.* Ours is "an holy calling . . . . the heavenly calling . . . . the high calling of God." 2 Timothy i. 9; Hebrews iii. 1; Philippians iii. 14.

We now return to our Patriarch, verse 1—9.

The charges which Abraham gives to Eliezer, clearly shew how thoroughly he was in the spirit and power of his place as a heavenly stranger in the land; and how earnest he was for Isaac to be maintained in the same place of separation as he himself had been. All his thoughts and counsels now centre on his son. A bride must be sought for the heir. But on no condi-

* See the Call of God handled at length in vol. x., page 91.

tion whatever can Abraham consent to Isaac's going down to Mesopotamia, or to his being allied with the daughters of Canaan. This is full of instruction to us. "Put, I pray thee," said Abraham to his faithful servant, "thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." This was new and strange work for a servant, and he very naturally supposes there may be difficulties in the way. He had no doubt often carried out his master's wishes, but this was a line of service altogether new. "Peradventure," said Eliezer, "the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land; must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?" Abraham's answer is distinct and positive; his purpose is one, whatever the difficulties may be. "And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again."

In all this we have beautifully shadowed forth the eternal purpose of God, confirmed by His word and oath, to glorify His Son as the exalted Man in heaven, and also to bless and glorify the church as associated with Him. Faith falls back and rests, not only on the work of Christ finished in time, but on the very thoughts and purposes of God's heart, as revealed in the divine counsels before the foundations of the earth were laid. Rebekah knew nothing while in Mesopotamia of the counsels of Abraham's family in Canaan; nevertheless, her call and future exaltation were founded on these.

So with the Christian, so with the church; hence we can join with the apostle, and say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places n Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Ephesians i. 3, 4.

GLEANINGS.

THE ENEMY OUTWITTED.—There lived in a certain village an aged disciple, in what men would call very poor circumstances. She had, as we say, no visible source of supply; but she depended upon the living God to meet her daily need; and no one who does so can ever be said to be in poor circumstances.

Well, it so happened, on one occasion, that our poor old friend was called to meet a trial of her faith—for God does try the faith which He implants in the soul, in order that the trial, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, may be found to praise and honour and glory. In this way and for this end, our aged pilgrim was tried, for she found herself, one morning, without a morsel of food, or a spark of fire. She was sitting in front of the empty grate, still waiting on her Father who was faithfully watching over her to meet her need, in His own marvellous way. Suddenly she was arrested by the strange sight of a loaf of bread let down by a cord through the chimney. She lifted up her heart in praise to the Giver of all good, took the loaf and made a hearty breakfast. The same God who

fed Elijah by means of the ravens, now fed His dear child by means no less strange.

In the course of the day a wicked boy, who was in the habit of mocking and teazing the dear old saint, came into her cabin, and in a jeering tone said, "Well granny, has the Lord sent you anything to-day?" "Yes," said she, "bless His name! He sent me a loaf of bread, this morning, when I had not a morsel of food in the house." "Ha!" said the boy, with a diabolical laugh, "It was not the Lord, at all; it was I who let it down through the chimney." "Indeed," said our poor old friend, "I do not care if it was the devil himself who did it, I know it was the Lord who sent the loaf to me."

And she was right. The devil was outwitted, inasmuch as the very wicked boy whom he had sent to mock a saint of God in a moment of pressure, was used of God to meet her need. Our Lord Christ is at the very highest place of power, and He is head over all things to His church. Earth and hell, men and devils are all under His control, and He can use them for His own glory and His people's good. All we have to do is to trust Him, and go right on. He can never fail a trusting heart—never—no, never.

Another dear child of God we once heard of who was reduced to great straits. She had no food in the house and no money to buy it. Some one called and told her there was a hamper directed to her at the railway office. She immediately went to inquire about it; but, to her dismay, she was told there was a shilling to pay on it. The poor thing left the office in deep distress. There was the supply, as it were, within arm's length of her.

but an insuperable barrier between her and it. The tears rolled down her pale cheeks and fell on the pavement. She cast her weeping eyes down and there, to her amazement, she beheld half-a-sovereign lying at her feet. With a thankful worshipping heart she lifted the coin, returned to the office and paid for the hamper in which she found a full supply.

We received the foregoing touching narrative from the brother of the poor woman, so that we can vouch for its truth, and we record it for the purpose of encouraging the Lord's poor to trust Him, at all times, and under all circumstances. "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God; for thy expectation is from Him."

THE BLINDING POWER OF A FALSE SYSTEM ON A TRUE CHRISTIAN.—In the life of Margaret, the Saxon queen of Malcolm III., of Scotland, we have a curious but interesting example of the evil effects of a false ecclesiastical system on a truly pious mind. She was fortunate in having obtained a good education, and had a good knowledge of the scriptures, but blinded by the teaching of her church so-called. Her own good works she believed to be necessary as a ground of pardon and acceptance. *The finished work of Christ*, as the alone ground of salvation, *and our union with Him* through the power of the Holy Spirit, as the alone ground of a holy life, have been obscured in all ages by false systems, and ever must be. They invariably prove to every soul, a house of bondage. Hence the fruitful origin of doings, feelings, doubts and fears, in every degree. The true peace and joy of christian liberty is never known. Galled by the yoke of bondage,

they are more ready to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The following is a specimen of the purest piety of the eleventh century.

"This royal lady, who has been honoured with canonization, though very superstitious, and somewhat ostentatious in her acts of beneficence, nevertheless possessed many eminent virtues, and must be ranked among the best of our queens. Every morning she prepared food for nine orphan children; and on her bended knees she fed them. With her own hands she ministered at table to crowds of indigent persons who assembled to share in her bounty; and nightly, before retiring to rest, she gave a still more striking proof of her humility by washing the feet of six of them. She was frequently in church, prostrated before the altar, and there with sighs and tears, and protracted prayers, she offered herself a sacrifice to the Lord. When the season of Lent came round, besides reciting particular offices, she went over the whole Psalter twice or thrice within twenty-four hours. Before repairing to public mass, she prepared herself for the solemnity, by hearing five or six private masses; and when the whole service was over, she fed twenty-four hungry on-hangers, and thus illustrated her faith by her works. It was not till these were satisfied that she retired to her own scanty meal. But with all this parade of humility there was an equal display of pride. Her dress was gorgeous, her retinue large, and her coarse fare must needs be served in dishes of silver and gold, a thing unheard of in Scotland till her time."—*Cunningham.*

I AM THE SHEPHERD TRUE.

I was wandering and weary
When the Saviour came to me,
For the paths of sin were dreary,
And the world had ceased to woo me;
And I thought I heard him say,
As He came along His way—
"Wand'ring souls, Oh! do come near me,
My sheep should never fear me:
I am the Shepherd true!"

At first I would not hearken,
But put off till the morrow;
But life began to darken,
And I was sick with sorrow;
And I thought I heard Him say,
As He came along His way—
"Wand'ring souls, Oh! do come near me,
My sheep should never fear me:
I am the Shepherd true!"

At last I stopped to listen;
His voice could ne'er deceive me.
I saw His kind eye glisten,
So anxious to relieve me;
And I was sure I heard Him say,
As He came along His way—
"Wand'ring souls, Oh! do come near me,
My sheep should never fear me:
I am the Shepherd true!"

He took me on His shoulder,
And tenderly He kissed me;
He bade my love grow bolder,
And said how He had missed me;
And I was sure I heard Him say,
As He went along His way—
"Wand'ring souls, Oh! do come near me,
My sheep should never fear me;
I am the Shepherd true!"

I thought His love would weaken,
As more and more He knew me;

But it burneth like a beacon,
And its light and heat go through me;
And I *ever* hear Him say,
As He goes along His way—
"Wand'ring souls, Oh! do come near me,
My sheep should never fear me,
I am the Shepherd true!"

THE GOOD, GREAT, AND CHIEF SHEPHERD.

As the *good* Shepherd, the blessed Lord *died* for His sheep. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x.) As the *great* Shepherd He rises from the dead to watch over with tender care, and to fold in His everlasting embrace, the flock for which He died. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Heb. xiii.) As the *chief* Shepherd He will gather around Himself on the bright and sunny fields of eternal glory, all His under shepherds, and place upon their heads a crown of glory as the answer of His love for their care of His sheep and lambs. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Peter v.

CORRESPONDENCE.

52. "A.," Bristol. We do not wonder at your being "much perplexed" if you could imagine for a moment that "a sweetly taught child of God" could give utterance to such a sentiment as that she "lives a sinless life." Do you not remember what the apostle John says, on this point? "If we [believers] say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

True, he says in another place, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God." And, again, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." The new man in the believer is as incapable of sinning as was Christ Himself; but for the believer to say that *he* is incapable of sinning is deceit, and delusion and blasphemy.

It is our privilege so to walk, in the Spirit, as not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh—so to live as that the flesh may not shew itself. But for anyone to talk of being incapable of sinning is to deny the value and meaning of a large portion of the New Testament. Where would be the need of self-judgment or confession? What should we have to watch against? Wherein would lie the force of such words as these, "mortify your members which are on the earth?" What should we have to mortify if we were incapable of sinning? If sin were not *dwelling* in us, where would be the meaning of "Let not sin *reign* in your mortal bodies?" If it were not there, how could it reign?

The solemn fact is, dear friend, if we do not watch, and pray, and keep under the body, and mortify its deeds and members, there is no knowing what depth of sin and folly we may plunge into. We should greatly fear that your "sweetly taught" friend has already fallen into the grievous sin of spiritual pride, and that

this will be followed by some gross moral evil, unless God, in His sovereign mercy, interpose.

We have generally found that persons who speak of sinless perfectness are astray both as to the real nature of sin, and the real nature of holiness. There is no security but in keeping close to the written word, and close to the side of our dear Lord and Saviour. He can keep us from committing sin; but to forget that we are capable of sinning is to fall directly into the hands of our great spiritual adversary.

As to your "rationalistic friend" we would simply remind you of the apostle's words—"Evil communications corrupt good manners." We fear you are not yourself sufficiently rooted and grounded in the faith to be able to meet either the rationalists or perfectionists. We would recommend you to give yourself much to the prayerful humble study of the word of God; and when you are unavoidably thrown into the company of opposers, see that you answer them in the veritable language of holy scripture. "*It is written*," has infinitely more power than "*I think*."

53. "An Invalid," Brighton. Your letter was too late for our June issue. We deeply sympathize with you, beloved friend. We have no doubt whatever but that the enemy takes advantage of your bodily weakness and pain to harass your precious soul. But you must not listen to him. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you"—"Whom resist, stedfast in the faith." Do not be measuring your own feelings or occupied with them. Rest like a child on the simple, precious, solid word of God. Do not attempt to answer the enemy by a reference to your present or past feelings or experience, but simply by the written word. This will give you great power, liberty, and blessing. The three great pillars on which you must stay your soul are these: first, the eternal love of God; secondly, the accomplished atonement of Christ; thirdly, the living testimony of the Holy Ghost in scripture. Satan can never touch these. May the dear Lord comfort and

sustain you, beloved, by His own direct and powerful ministry! To Him we do, most lovingly, commend you.

54. "A Reader of 'T. N. & O.'" It is, assuredly, the privilege of every dear child of God to appropriate to himself the rich comfort and consolation of 2 Corinthians iv. 17, whatever shape his "Light affliction" may take.

55. A correspondent inquires if there is any argument against the theory "that the nation of England can be identified with the ten tribes." We believe that there is just as much show of scripture or common sense in seeking to define the sepulchre of Moses, as in settling as to who or where the ten tribes are. God knows perfectly about both. Man knows nothing about either. To attempt to theorize on such a subject, is to be wise above what is written—a species of wisdom which we do not covet.

We would here observe that we should feel thankful if our correspondents would, in every instance, give their name and address. It is a great satisfaction.

56. "E. G.," Salisbury. The difficulty to which you refer arises from confounding two things which differ essentially, namely, all meetings of the assembly, as such; and all meetings convened and conducted on the principle of individual responsibility. If this distinction be thoroughly seized, all difficulty vanishes. The public preaching of the gospel, and specific lectures and expositions are carried on upon the latter principle, and are quite independent of the assembly. The members of the assembly may be present or not, as they feel disposed. Moreover the assembly may kindly lend their room or hall for such individual services; or the evangelist or teacher may hire a public hall for himself, or have it hired for him. It is his own individual work for which he alone is responsible. He may associate others with him in his work; but we must never confound such work with the meetings of the assembly for communion and worship. If I am ex-

pected to meet a public congregation, either with the gospel or an exposition, I am bound to be there myself or to provide a substitute. To leave such a meeting "*open*," as it *is called, is to break faith with the public.* Of course, it may happen that a man is taken suddenly ill, and is unable to find a substitute, in that case the audience will make allowance. As to a person who possesses no gift for public speaking undertaking what is called "the responsibility of the preaching," we do not believe in it, as a rule. It rarely works well, and is encumbered with all sorts of difficulties. We understand a man's being responsible to preach if Christ has *given him the gift to do it*; but we do not understand "the responsibility of the preaching" resting on the shoulders of an ungifted person. We only speak of the general principle; but, in times like the present, we must seek to do the best we can to reach precious souls, whether it be the unconverted, or the dear lambs and sheep of the flock of Christ. We often think of Nelson's reply to his admirals, when they asked in what way they should attack the combined fleets of France and Spain—"*Any way you can get at them.*" So we say to you, beloved brother, Get at the souls as best you can; and to all who would hamper you with crotchets, just say, "Be ye far from hence."

57. "C. C." Leeds. In Revelation i. and ii. we have the church addressed as a responsible witness for Christ on the earth, hence the admonitions, warnings, and threatenings. You must distinguish between privilege and responsibility. Nothing can ever touch "the eternal security of the believer;" but we are called upon to "overcome" the condition of things with which we are surrounded in the professing church; and the overcomer is assured that his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life. This book is quite distinct from "the book of the slain lamb." Your difficulty arises from theology.

"THE MAN OF GOD."

PART II.

To all whose eyes have been opened to see their true condition, by nature—who have been brought under the convicting power of the Holy Ghost—who know aught of the real meaning of a broken heart and a contrite spirit—to all such it must be of the deepest possible interest to know the divine secret of rest and peace. If it be true—and it is true, because God says it—that "they that are *in the flesh* cannot please God"—then how is any one to get *out of the flesh?* How can he pass off the platform of nature? How can he reach the blessed position of those to whom the Holy Ghost declares, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit?"

These are momentous questions, surely. For, be it thoroughly known and ever remembered, that no improvement of our old nature is of any value whatsoever, as to our standing before God. It may be all very well, so far as this life is concerned, for a man to improve himself, by every means within his reach, to cultivate his mind, furnish his memory, elevate his moral tone, advance his social position. All this is quite true, so true as not to need a moment's argument.

But, admitting, in the fullest manner, the truth of all this, it leaves wholly untouched the solemn and sweeping statement of the inspired apostle that "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." There *must* be a new standing altogether, and this new standing cannot be reached by any change in the old nature—by any doings—any sayings—any feelings—ordinances of re-

ligion, prayers, alms or sacraments. Do what you will with nature and it is nature still. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and do what you will with flesh you cannot make it spirit. There must be a new life—a life flowing from the new man, the last Adam, who has become, in resurrection, the Head of a new race.

How is this most precious life to be had? Hear the memorable answer—hear it, anxious reader—hear it and live. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but *is passed* from death unto life." John v. 24.

Here we have a total change of standing—a passing from death to life—from a position in which there is not so much as a single link with heaven—with the new creation—with the risen Man in glory, into a position in which there is not a single link with the first man—with the old creation—and this present evil world. And all this is through believing on the Son of God—not *saying* we believe, but really, truly, heartily, believing on the Son of God—not by a head belief, a nominal, notional, intellectual faith—but by believing with the heart.

Thus only does any one become

A MAN IN CHRIST.

Every true believer is a man in Christ. Whether it be the convert of yesterday or the hoary headed saint of fifty or sixty years' standing as a Christian, each stands in precisely the same blessed position—he is in Christ. There can be no difference here. The practical

state may differ immensely; but the positive standing is one and the same. As on the platform of nature, you may meet with every imaginable shade, grade, class and condition, though all having one common standing; so on the new, the divine, the heavenly platform, you may meet with every possible variety of practical condition: the greatest possible difference in intelligence, experience, and spiritual power, while all possessing the same standing before God, all being in Christ. There can be no degrees as to standing, whatever there may be as to state. The convert of yesterday, and the hoary headed father in Christ are both alike as to standing. Each is a man in Christ, and there can be no advance upon this. We sometimes hear of "The higher christian life;" but, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a higher or a lower christian life, inasmuch as Christ is the life of every believer. It may be that those who use the term mean a right thing. They probably refer to the higher stages of the christian life—greater nearness to God—greater likeness to Christ—greater power in the Spirit—more devotedness—more separation from the world—more entire consecration of heart to Christ. But all these things belong to the question of our *state*, not to our standing. This latter is absolute, settled, unchangeable. It is in Christ, nothing less, nothing more, nothing different. If we are not in Christ, we are in our sins; but if we are in Christ, we cannot possibly be higher, as to standing.

If the reader will turn with us, for a few moments, to 1 Corinthians xv. 45–48, he will find some powerful teaching on this great foundation truth. The apostle speaks here of two men, "the first and the second."

And let it be carefully noted that the second Man is, by no means, federally connected with the first, but stands in contrast with him—a new, independent, divine, heavenly source of life in Himself. The first man has been entirely set aside, as a ruined, guilty, outcast creature. We speak of Adam federally—as the head of a race. Personally, Adam was saved by grace; but if we look at him from a federal standpoint, we see him a hopeless wreck.

The first man is an irremediable ruin. This is proved by the fact of a second Man, for truly we may say of the men as of the covenants, "If the first had been found faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." But the very fact of a second Man being introduced demonstrates the hopeless ruin of the first. Why a second, if aught could be made of the first? If our old Adam nature was, in any wise, capable of being improved, there was no need of something new. But "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Romans viii., Galatians vi.

There is immense moral power in all this line of teaching. It sets forth Christianity in vivid and striking contrast with every form of religiousness under the sun. Take Judaism or any other *ism* that ever was known or that now exists in this world, and what do you find it to be? Is it not invariably something designed for the testing, trying, improvement, or advancement of the first man? Unquestionably.

But what is Christianity? It is something entirely new—heavenly—spiritual—divine. It is based upon

the cross of Christ, in the which the first man came to his end—where sin was put away—judgment borne—the old man crucified and put out of God's sight for ever, so far as all believers are concerned. The cross closes, for faith, the history of the first man. "I am crucified with Christ," says the apostle. And again, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts."

Are these mere figures of speech, or do they set forth, in the mighty words of the Holy Ghost, the grand fact of the entire setting aside of our old nature, as a thing utterly worthless and condemned? The latter, most assuredly, blessed be God. Christianity starts, as it were, from the open grave of the second Man, to pursue its bright career onward to eternal glory. It is, emphatically, a new creation in which there is not so much as a single shred of the old thing—for "all things are of God." And if "*all things*" are of God, there can be nothing of man.

What rest! What comfort! What strength! What moral elevation! What sweet relief for the poor burdened soul that has been vainly seeking, for years perhaps, to find peace in self-improvement! What deliverance from the wretched thraldom of legality, in all its phases, to find out the precious secret that my guilty, ruined, bankrupt self—the very thing that I have been trying, by every means in my power, to improve, has been completely and for ever set aside—that God is not looking for any amendment in it—that He has condemned it and put it to death in the cross of His Son! What an answer is here to the monk, the ascetic, and the ritualist! Oh! that it were understood

in all its emancipating power! This heavenly, this divine, this spiritual Christianity. Surely were it only known in its living power and reality, it would deliver the soul from the thousand and one forms of corrupt religion whereby the arch-enemy and deceiver is ruining the souls of untold millions. We may truly say that Satan's masterpiece—his most successful effort against the truth of the Gospel, against the Christianity of the New Testament—is seen in the fact of his leading unconverted people to take and apply to themselves ordinances of the christian religion, and to profess many of its doctrines. In this way he blinds their eyes to their own true condition, as utterly ruined, guilty, and undone; and strikes a deadly blow at the pure Gospel of Christ. The best piece that was ever put upon the "old garment" of man's ruined nature is the profession of Christianity; and, the better the piece, the worse the rent. See Mark ii. 21.

Let us bend an attentive ear to the following weighty words of the greatest teacher and best exponent of true Christianity the world ever saw. "For *I* through law *am dead* to law, that I might live to God. *I am crucified* with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet *not I*, but Christ liveth in me." Mark this, "I—not I—but Christ." The old "I"—"crucified." The new "I"—Christ. "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians ii. 19, 20.*

* The reader will distinguish between the expression "in the flesh" as used in Galatians ii 20, and in Romans viii. 8, 9. In the former, it simply refers to our condition as in the body. In the latter, it sets forth the principle or ground of our standing. The

This, and nothing else, is Christianity. It is not "the old man"—the first Adam—nature, becoming religious, even though the religion be the profession of the doctrines, and the adopting of the ordinances of Christianity. No; it is the death, the crucifixion, the burial of the old man—the old I—the old nature, and becoming a new man in Christ. Every true believer is a new man in Christ. He has passed clean out of the old creation-standing—the old estate of sin and death, guilt and condemnation; and he has passed into a new creation-standing—into a new estate of life and righteousness in a risen and glorified Christ—the Head of the new creation—the last Adam.

Such is the position and unalterable standing of the very feeblest believer in Christ. There is absolutely no other standing for any Christian. I must either be in the first man or in the second. There is no *third* man, for the second Man is the last Adam. There is no middle ground. I am either *in Christ*, or I am *in my sins*. But if I am in Christ, I am as He is before God. "As *he is* so *are we*, in this world." He does not say, "As he *was*" but "as he *is*." That is, the Christian is viewed by God as one with Christ, in every respect—His Deity, of course, excepted, as being incommunicable. That blessed One stood in the believer's stead—bore his sins, died his death, paid his penalty, represented him, in every respect; took all his guilt, all his liabilities, all that pertained to him as a man in

believer is in the body, as to the fact of his condition; but he is not in the flesh as to the principle of his standing. But very often the expression "in the flesh," is synonymous with being "in the body." We need to ponder more deeply the words of scripture.

nature, stood as his substitute, in all the verity and reality of that word, and having divinely met his case, and borne his judgment, He rose from the dead, and is now the Head, the Representative and the only true definition of the believer before God.

To this most glorious and enfranchising truth, holy scripture bears the amplest testimony. The passage which we have just quoted from Galatians is a most vivid, powerful, and condensed statement of it. And if the reader will turn to Romans vi. he will find further evidence. We shall quote some of the weighty sentences.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Far be the thought. How shall *we that are dead* to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that *like as Christ* was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, *even so we also* should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also of resurrection. Knowing this that *our old man is crucified with him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we *be dead with Christ*, we believe that we shall also live with him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans vi. 1–11.

Reader, mark, especially, these words in the foregoing quotation—"We that *are dead*"—"We are buried with him"—"*Like as Christ* was raised . . . . *even so* we also"—"Our old man is crucified with him"—"Dead with Christ"—"Dead indeed unto sin." Do we really understand such utterances? Have we entered into their real force and meaning? Do we, in very deed, perceive their application to ourselves. These are searching questions for the heart; but they are needful. The real doctrine of Romans vi. is but little apprehended. There are thousands who profess to believe in the atoning virtue of the death of Christ, but who do not see aught therein beyond the forgiveness of their *sins*. They do not see the crucifixion, death, and burial of the old man—the destruction of the body of sin—the condemnation of sin—the entire setting aside of the old system of things belonging to their first Adam condition—in a word their perfect identification with a dead and risen Christ. Hence it is that we press this grand and all-important line of truth upon the attention of the reader. It lies at the very base of all true Christianity, and forms an integral part of the truth of the Gospel.

Let us hearken to further evidence on the point. Hear what the apostle saith to the Colossians: "Wherefore, if ye be *dead with Christ* from the rudiments of the world, why, *as though living in the world*, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men, [such as] touch not, taste not, handle not"—thus it is that human ordinances speak to us, telling us not to touch this, not to taste that, not to handle the other, as if there could possibly be any divine principle involved in such things—"which all

are to perish with the using;" and which, "have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For *ye are dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Here, again, let us inquire how far we enter into the true force, meaning, and application of such words as these—"Why as though *living in the world*," &c.? Are we living in the world or living in heaven—which? The true Christian is one who has died out of this present evil world. He has no more to do with it than Christ. "Like as Christ . . . . even so we." He is dead to the law—dead to sin: alive in Christ—alive to God—alive in the new creation. He belongs to heaven. He is enrolled as a citizen of heaven. His religion, his politics, his morals are all heavenly. He is a heavenly man walking on the earth, and fulfilling all the duties which belong to the varied relationships in which the hand of God has placed him, and in which the word of God most fully recognizes him, and amply guides him, such as husband, father, master, child, servant, and such like. The Christian is not a monk, an ascetic, or a hermit. He is, we repeat, a heavenly, spiritual man, *in* the world, but not *of* it. He is like a foreigner so far as his residence here is concerned. He is in the body, as to the fact of his condition; but not in the flesh as to the principle of his standing. He is *a man in Christ*.

Ere closing this article, we should like to call the

reader's attention to 2 Corinthians xii. In it he will find, at once, the *positive standing* and the *possible state* of the believer. The standing is fixed and unalterable, as set forth in that one comprehensive sentence—"A man in Christ." The state may graduate between the two extremes presented in the opening and closing verses of this chapter. A Christian may be in the third heaven, amid the seraphic visions of that blessed and holy place; or he may, if not watchful, sink down into all the gross and evil things named in verses 20, 21.

It may be asked, "Is it possible that a true child of God could ever be found in such a low moral condition?" Alas! alas! reader, it is indeed possible. There is no depth of sin and folly into which a Christian is not capable of plunging, if not kept by the grace of God. Even the blessed apostle himself, when he came down from the third heaven, needed "a thorn in the flesh" to keep him from being "exalted above measure." We might suppose that a man who had been up in that bright and blessed region could never again feel the stirrings of pride. But the plain fact is that even the third heavens cannot cure the flesh. It is utterly incorrigible, and must be judged and kept under, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, else it will cut out plenty of sorrowful work for us.

Still, nothing can touch the believer's standing. He is in Christ, for ever—justified, accepted, perfect in Him, and never can be anything else. And, moreover, he must ever judge his state by his standing, never his standing by his state. To attempt to reach the standing by my state is *legalism*, to refuse to judge my state by the standing is *antinomianism*. Both—though so

diverse one from the other—are alike false—alike opposed to the truth of God—alike offensive to the Holy Ghost—alike removed from the divine idea of "A Man in Christ."

MEDITATIONS ON THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

(Genesis xxii., xxiii., xxiv.)

THE POSITION OF ISAAC.

The character of the agreement between Abraham and his servant, clearly reveal to us the position of Isaac at that time. He was with his father in the land of Canaan, and there he was to remain until a bride was found for him. Come what may, one thing was settled, Isaac must not go down to Mesopotamia. This is most significant; it speaks home to the heart—it speaks of the true Isaac. He abides with his Father in heaven while the church is being called out from among Jews and Gentiles to form the heavenly bride, the Lamb's wife. Christ ascended up to heaven before the day of Pentecost, and leaves it not again until the rapture of the saints. The typical Isaac is concealed from our view from the time he leaves Moriah, as dead and risen, until he comes out to meet Rebekah. As in the matter of the altar and sacrifice of mount Moriah, so here, he acts in full accordance with the father's counsels, his own typical character, and appears not on the scene until his first and private interview with the bride of faith.

But what voice, let me ask, has this truth to thee, O my soul? Pass it not lightly over, I pray thee. The

voice is plain enough; but the separation from the world which it teaches is too absolute to be easily or willingly understood. Most Christians are so habitually mixed up with the world that they have no practical acquaintance with this great truth. But let me explain. All admit that Christ is the one, true, and only proper object for the Christian's heart. This is clearly taught by such expressions as "Look unto me". . . . "One thing I do". . . . "For me to live is Christ". . . . "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."

Seeing then that Christ has gone to heaven, and that all His associations are heavenly, we must set our hearts on Him who is there, and pursue a path down here in accordance with His mind, if we would live and walk in fellowship with our Head in heaven. It is perfectly clear, that if Christ has no association with the world just now, and we have, contrary to His mind, communion is interrupted, in our not walking in company with Him. This is a grand practical point, and well deserves thy deepest meditations. It affects the whole course of the Christian. All questions, all occupations, all associations, must be examined and estimated in the light of His glory, and of our *oneness* with Him. There is but one standard for the Christian—Christ in the glory. We must work from Him as our Head, and for Him in all our service. How this, how that, bears upon Him, is the question. He thus becomes, as we grow in the knowledge of Him, our motive, power, object, and portion, as our hymn says,

> "'Tis the treasure I have found in His love,
> That has made me a pilgrim below."

Truer lines never were written by a human pen. Communion with Christ in heaven is alone powerful to make thee heavenly, and to make thee feel as a pilgrim and a stranger in this world. Nothing but the treasures of His love could wean thy heart from present things and fix it on things above. Try as thou mayest, and as many have done, to become heavenly in thy thoughts and feelings by much prayer, constant occupation with religious duties, and great watchfulness over thy spirit, thou wilt find all to be of little avail without the knowledge and enjoyment of thy relationship to Him who is at the right hand of God in heaven.

Right as all these duties are—and they ought never to be neglected—their best performance will never make thee a stranger here and at home in heaven. Abstraction from the world, or apparently outside of it, through the diligent discharge of religious duties, and separation from it by faith, are widely different things, though often confounded. The ascetic may take the world with him into the narrowest cell.

The grand secret, then, and practical power of Christianity; of heavenly-mindedness; of true strangership as to this world; is happy fellowship with a heavenly Christ. He remains apart from the world while the out-calling of the church is in progress; and so should Christians as to their spirit and ways. They are called to be one *with Him* in heaven, and to be witnesses *for Him* in the world. But, alas! there are many who do not enter into the truth of our association with Christ; and who attach no definite meaning to such language as "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand

of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 1–3.) And being willingly ignorant of those all-influential truths, they slip into a false position, become worldly, and are false witnesses for Christ both in the church and in the world. Nothing preserves the believer from worldliness, social, political, or religious, but the power of a risen Christ, enjoyed by faith. If, then, the measure of our enjoyment of a heavenly Christ be the measure of our separation from the world, the appalling amount of worldliness which prevails among Christians, can be easily accounted for.

But some will be ready to object and say, "How can we so undividedly set our minds on heavenly things while engaged in business and the affairs of this life all day long?" Impossible, we answer, without an undivided heart for Christ. "No servant," as He says Himself, "can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." This is indeed a searching word, but its meaning is plain—no heart can be true with divided affections. Christ claims an undivided heart. "My son, give me thine heart." Who then, what then, is my object? This is the real question. Not what am I engaged in; not what am I doing; but what is the governing object before me? The Christian has to learn, and constantly to study the divine art of going through all his duties as service to the Lord. Whatever cannot be taken up and heartily performed as service to Him must be laid aside. There is

divine wisdom in all this, and great blessing to the Christian's soul; though the path is narrow and can only be traced with the single eye.

The Christian's path through this world is so beset with dangers on every side, that a right sense of his own weakness and great responsibility will make him fear and tremble. And justly so. But this will lead him, not to despair, but to trust in the living God. Where there is no proper sense of weakness and responsibility, there can be no security for christian consistency. Covetousness, pride, vain glory, carnal ease, self-indulgence, are some of the snares that surround the path of worldly prosperity. And the enemy watching our tendencies, knows how to foster and increase them. Hence we may find some who would strongly object to vain display and self-indulgence, caught in the snare of covetousness, and that under the plea of frugality, or even humility. Adversity, too, has its snares. There may be complaining, envy, and discontent, along with our difficulties. But we dwell not on these; rather would we turn to the remedy, by which we may be preserved from every wile of the enemy. Nothing short of personal communion with the Son, who is with the Father, is adequate to raise the soul above the dangers of prosperity and adversity, above self and the world, above the association of nature, and above all the attractions of earth.

The Lord in His great mercy teach us all these lessons of faith, and enable us to manifest the efficacy of His presence as enjoyed amidst the toils and trials of this world.

"DEATH."

THERE are two ways of looking at death—two standpoints from which to view it; and no human language can set forth all that is involved in the solemn and weighty question—"How do I look at this profound mystery of death?"

Looked at from nature's point of view, death is most terrific—man's last enemy—his most terrible foe. There is nothing which, as a man, I possess, that death will not take from me. Riches, honours, dignities, pleasures, all, in short, that the human heart values—all that goes to make up the sum of human happiness in this world—all that makes life agreeable—all must pass away under the withering touch of the hand of death. If I had enough wealth to pay off the national debt of England; though I were possessed of all the precious gems that glitter on the person of the Persian Shah; though I stood at the very summit of political and literary fame; though I were the admired of all admirers; the most favoured of fortune's sons; the leader of fashion's votaries; able to live a life of learned leisure and splendid luxury; yea, if it were possible for me to quadruple the wealth and splendour of king Solomon; yet, when death approaches, I *must* leave all. The wealth of the universe could not purchase one moment's respite from the cruel grasp of the king of terrors. When death, like a mighty detective, lays hold on me, *go I must.*

Yes; there is no discharge—no getting out of it. I may weep and lament, beseech and entreat, summon around me the very highest medical authorities, offer fabulous fees, try all the resources of medicine, surround

my bed with a circle of friends who would give worlds —if they had them—to detain me. But all in vain. The ruthless tyrant seizes me and *will* have me away. Yes, away from all my joys, all my pleasures, all my wealth and splendour, my literature, my learning, my fame, my ease and luxury—away from all these things to—what? Ah! this is the question.

And this question *must* be answered, sooner or later. There is no possibility of getting rid of it. I may try to reason it away, to laugh it away, to sing it away, to dance it away, to drink it away, to smoke it away, to gamble it away; but it will not do; for, at the other side of all these things stands the grim and terrible foe, death ready armed to carry me off to—what? To judgment and a never-ending eternity. Overwhelming consideration!

But, reader, there is another way of looking at this great question. Did your eye ever rest on 1 Corinthians iii. 22? There is a most remarkable item set down there in the inventory of the believer's possessions. "All things are yours," says the apostle, and amongst the "all" he sets down "death."

Think of this, what a strange possession! "Death is yours." However can this be? How has it come to pass that man's last enemy—his most dreaded foe—that from which he shrinks with such horror—this terrible thing called death should be actually an item in the Christian's possessions?

The cross furnishes the answer. Christ has died—died the Just for the unjust—died for our sins according to the scriptures. Thus has He taken the sting from death—for the sting of death is sin—and completely

changed its character for the believer. He has turned it from being our worst enemy into our best friend. He has gone down into that deep, dark river, put back its terrible flood, made it a pathway for His people whereby they pass over into their glorious inheritance, and left behind in its depths the memorial of His full victory over all its power.

Thus it is that death is ours. What a marvellous change! Looked at from nature's standpoint, man belongs to death. Looked at from faith's standpoint, death belongs to man. In the old creation, there is not so much as a single thing which death does not take from us. In the new creation, on the contrary, there is not a single thing which death does not give us. There is not a single privilege, not a single blessing, not a single dignity, which, as Christians, we possess, that we do not owe to death. We have life, through death; forgiveness of sins, through death; everlasting righteousness, through death; eternal glory, through death—the precious death of Christ.

Glorious fact! Death is ours. Shall we any longer fear it? Surely not. Its character is completely changed for us, so that if it should come to us, it only comes to do us the very best service, namely, to dissolve our connection with all that is mortal; to snap the link that binds us to a scene of sorrow and trial; to deliver us from a world of sin and wickedness, and introduce us to a scene of ineffable bliss, holy repose, and unbroken communion.

Oh! Why is it that Christians are so afraid of death? It must be because they are looking at it from nature's standpoint instead of faith's. Surely, if we were more

living in that region into which the death of Christ has introduced us—if we were dying daily—if we were walking in the power of the heavenly life, our thoughts of death would be very different from what they are. But alas! alas! we live too much in the region of nature —we surround ourselves with natural things and *give ourselves* too much to them—"we walk as men"—we are not sufficiently familiar with heaven as our proper sphere of being. Hence it is we shrink from that which must break our every link with this present scene.

May the Holy Spirit lead our souls into more profound exercise as to this great subject, so that we may carry ourselves somewhat more consistently in respect to it, and maintain and exhibit that moral elevation above present things which shall be to the praise of Him who has called us into living association with Himself.

"Lord Jesus! we remember
The travail of thy soul,
When, through thy love's deep pity,
The waves did o'er thee roll;
Baptized in death's dark waters,
For us thy blood was shed;
For us thou (Lord of glory)
Wast numbered with the dead.

O Lord! thou now art risen,
Thy travail all is o'er;
For sin thou once hast suffered—
Thou liv'st to die no more;
Sin, death, and hell are vanquished
By thee the church's head;
And lo! we share thy triumphs,
Thou first-born from the dead.

Into thy death baptized,
We own with thee we died;
With thee. our life, we're risen,
And shall be glorified.
From sin, the world, and Satan,
We're ransomed by thy blood,
And here would walk as strangers,
Alive with thee to God."

GLEANINGS.

THE ENEMY OVERRULED.—Two servants of the Lord went, on one occasion, to preach the gospel at a village, about five miles from the town where they resided. The enemy sought to hinder, as he ever does, and stirred up certain of that class so aptly designated, in the Acts of the Apostles, "lewd fellows of the baser sort," who set the bells a-ringing in order to stop the preaching. But the good Lord helped His servants and enabled them, spite of all the malignant efforts of the enemy, to deliver their precious message of free salvation through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having discharged their commission, they started for home, and taking a short cut across the fields, they missed their way, so that the short cut proved a very long one, for they wandered about till nearly two o'clock in the morning.

Next day, a woman from the village called on one of these dear men of God, in great anxiety, to know how they had fared on their way home. She informed him that some of the godless fellows had conspired to way-lay them, at a certain point, and ill-treat them. But

God so ordered it that, just before His dear servants reached the place where the enemy was lying in wait, they missed the direct path and so escaped their cruel hands.

How marked was the hand of God in this circumstance! How little did His servants know, at the time, why they were allowed to miss their way! Perhaps they felt impatient. Perhaps they attributed their mistake to the enemy. But, ah! the Lord Himself was in it, for if they had not gone astray, there is no knowing what those wicked men might have done to them.

How sweet it is, beloved reader, to walk with God, from day to day, and hour to hour! How blessed and how real to lean on His almighty arm and trust His perfect love! How tranquillizing to remember that our very best Friend is at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, in the very highest place of power, Head over all things to His church, possessing all power in heaven and on earth. Who can harm us? What have we to fear? What need have we of an arm of flesh to help us? Were not those two dear men of God much better protected on that night, than if they had had an escort of police? No doubt. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." Oh! for more artless confidence!

LITTLE AND OFTEN—"Do you ever feel heavy and dull in private prayer, and not at all up to the mark?" said a dear experienced pastor to a young disciple. "Indeed I do," said she. "And what do you do?" said he. "Well, I would rather that you should tell me what you

do." "Oh, it is very simple, my dear; it is just like having a poor appetite: you eat *little and often.*"

This was very sound advice. Would it were more acted upon. How often it happens that, when we feel dull and heavy, we neglect private prayer and the study of the word altogether, and thus we run down in our spiritual state and get away from the Lord. Let us watch against this; and even though we should feel so barren and cold as not to be able to utter five words, let us fall on our knees and cry, "Father! Father! My God! My Saviour!" Let us repeat this again and again, until the soul is refreshed and strengthened. Let us adopt the sweet though homely saying—"*Little and Often.*"

DIVINE INTIMACY.—The intimacy between the Lord and His elect is beyond, we may say, what is known elsewhere. Angels do His pleasure, wait in His presence, have kept their first estate, and excel in that strength that serves Him. But they are not where elect sinners are. They learn, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God—to us, all that the Son has received from the Father, He has made known. The Saviour acquaints Himself with the secrets of the bosom of the sinner; while He communicates to such a one the secrets of the divine bosom. This is intimacy indeed. He finds us, at the beginning, in our ruin—we are taken up as sinners, having come short of His glory, and are in revolt and distance from Him. It is from such a point we start on the way. But He leads us along from our depths to His heights, from our ruin to His wonders and riches of mercy. And at last He

plants us on an elevation where we can challenge all our enemies, and find ourselves above all that might be against us. Who can be against us? is the language of the heart there; who can accuse, who can condemn, who can separate?

THE PRIZE.—*It is a great thing for the soul when* resurrection from among the dead, and likeness to Christ in glory, are the grand objects of its earnest desire and fervent hope. This was the state of the apostle's mind. One thing, at least, he could say, he forgot all that was behind as to progress or attainment, and pressed on towards the goal, keeping it always in sight, *to obtain the prize of the high calling of God, which* can only be in the resurrection state. Till then, like Rebekah in the desert, we must press on; at the same time living Christ, and having Christ as our one object. Blessed are all they who have the single eye and the undivided heart, in following the Saviour risen and glorified, according to the whole will of God.

"I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK."

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians iii. 14.

AH, tell me not of gold and treasure,
Of pomp and beauty here on earth!
There's not a thing that gives me pleasure
Of all the world displays for worth.
Each heart will love and seek its own:
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone!

In Him I find mine exaltation,
My fairest visions of delight:

I feed mine eyes, mine expectation,
On Him alone, my Rest, my Light!
Each heart will seek and love its own:
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone!

The world and her pursuits will perish;
Her beauty's fading like a flower;
The brightest schemes the flesh can cherish
Are but the pastime of an hour.
Each heart will seek and love its own:
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone!

Against this tower there's no prevailing;
His kingdom passes not away;
His throne abides, despite assailing,
From henceforth unto endless day.
Each heart will seek and love its own:
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone!

His riches are too vast to measure;
His countenance is as the sun;
Apart from Him there's nought of treasure;
He is the Changeless, living One.
Each heart will seek and love its own:
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone!

However rough the road and dreary,
His glory marks me out a way;
Howe'er in need, distressed, and weary,
His strength, His grace are as my day.
Each heart will seek and love its own:
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone!

And though a pilgrim I must wander,
Still absent from the One I love,
He soon will have me with Him yonder
In His own glory-realms above.
Triumphantly I therefore own,
My goal is Christ, and Christ alone!

Translated from the German.

CORRESPONDENCE.

58. "Letitia," London. Judging from the earnest tone of your letter we cannot doubt the reality of the Spirit's work in your precious soul. What you want, now, is settled rest of conscience in the finished work of Christ, and rest of heart in Himself as an object to fill and satisfy you for ever. We judge you are quickened but not yet sealed. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty;" but you do not seem to be at liberty.

Further, where the Spirit of God is there is power; but you do not seem to have power. We fondly trust you may soon be led into the full blessedness which is treasured up for the believer in Christ. You must be led to the end of self, in every shape and form—to give up your own righteousness, your own doings, your own feelings, everything, in short, of yourself, and accept a full Christ. Then you will be "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." All true believers are thus sealed. The Holy Ghost is the seal which God puts upon all those who truly believe in His Son. We must distinguish between the work of the Holy Ghost, and His indwelling, The former is seen in the very first dawn of true conviction or repentance. The latter is connected with simple faith in a risen and glorified Saviour, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed." That is called in 1 Peter i. 2, "sanctification of the Spirit." This is His personal indwelling in the believer. See Acts xix. 1–6.

We are intensely interested in your case; and we pray that the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls may lead you, by His Spirit, to find in Himself all that rest and peace, joy, comfort, and strength, after which you so ardently long.

59. "L. M.," London. You have our deepest sympathy in your peculiarly trying circumstances. May

the dear Lord sustain and comfort you! May He give you to taste the deep blessedness of being "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." May He open your way to attend the meeting of His people, and the ministry of His word! Wait patiently on Him. Do not, on any account, act clandestinely. This will never do. You could not possibly expect blessing or profit while acting deceitfully. Be honest, be above board, cost what it may. It is often very good for us to be obliged to give up our own will, even in the matter of attending meetings. We reap much more profit in subduing our will than in attending a lecture. We shall be very glad to hear again from you and your young friend, and, in the meantime, we commend you very earnestly to God, and the word of His grace.

60. "J. B.," Burnham. We can, most fully, appreciate the difficulty under which you labour; but we cannot possibly expect to walk in days like these, without encountering difficulties. We have looked at this "vexed question" in all its bearings, seen it in all its workings, examined it in the light of scripture, and we do not see any other way of dealing with it than that which has been adopted. We can thoroughly understand how one in your circumstances must be stumbled by it; but we feel assured that, if your eye is single, you will be led aright. The question must be looked at abstractedly, in the presence of God. The moment we think of the probable results, or of how it will affect persons, we are plunged in darkness and confusion. We do not think there is the least necessity for troubling newly converted souls with this matter, or indeed of troubling any save such as have been mixed up with it. We are only too thankful to ignore it altogether whenever we can. It is only vessels coming from a port where plague is raging that should be put under quarantine. But, where the question is raised, there is no other course possible save plain decision for Christ, cost what it may. You may rest assured, dear friend, that, in

this business, as in all besides, "there is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen. The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it;" and although this "path" may be obscured by the wrong and foolish actings of those who profess to be in it, still the single eye will surely find it, and the obedient foot will tread it. "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil is understanding." We do, most earnestly, desire that you and hundreds of others of God's dear people may have His mind in this matter, and be enabled to walk, with firm step and fixed purpose, in that path which He has marked out for us in this dark and evil day.

61. "I. J.," Bromley Common. 1 John v. 16 refers to the governmental dealings of God in which He may see fit to visit a certain sin with the death of the body. Compare 1 Corinthians xi. 30.

62. "A tried and tempted one," Ilfracombe. Your case was named at the prayer meeting, and elicited the deepest sympathy. We have never heard more earnest prayer made for any one. Surely, our God will hear and answer. One dear friend was so deeply moved by your letter that he has written to you, and only waits to know your address, to forward his letter. May the dear Lord Himself lead you into the divine peace of His own most precious Gospel! Do, dear friend, let us hear from you again.

63. "S. P.," Cotswold. Accept our warmest thanks, beloved brother, for your kind note and accompanying fragment.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have several communications now lying before us in reference to subjects which have been repeatedly gone into; and we here, once for all, beg to inform our friends that we shall not, in future, take any notice of questions which have already been answered.

"THE MAN OF GOD."

PART III.

HAVING considered, in our last two numbers, the deeply interesting question of "A man in nature" and "A man in Christ," it remains for us, now, to dwell for a little, in the third and last place, on the thoroughly practical subject suggested by the title of this paper, namely,

THE MAN OF GOD.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that every Christian is a man of God. Even in Paul's day—in the days of Timothy, there were many who bore the christian name who were very far indeed from acquitting themselves as men of God, that is, as those who were really God's men, in the midst of the failure and error which, even then, had begun to creep in.

It is the perception of this fact that renders the Second Epistle to Timothy so profoundly interesting. In it we have what we may call ample provision for the man of God, in the day in which he is called to live—a dark, evil and perilous day, most surely, in which all who will live godly must keep the eye steadily fixed on Christ Himself—His Name—His Person—His word, if they would make any headway against the tide.

It is hardly possible to read Second Timothy without being struck with its intensely individual character. The very opening address is strikingly characteristic. "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."

What glowing words are these! How affecting to

hearken thus to one man of God pouring the deep and tender feelings of his great, large, loving heart into the heart of another man of God! The dear apostle was beginning to feel the chilling influence that was fast creeping over the professing church. He was tasting the bitterness of disappointed hopes. He found himself deserted by many who had once professed to be his friends and, associates in that glorious work to which he had consecrated all the energies of his great soul. Many were becoming "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, and of his prisoner." It was not that they altogether ceased to be Christians, or abandoned the christian profession; but they turned their backs upon Paul, and left him alone in the day of trial.

Now, it is under such circumstances that the heart turns, with peculiar tenderness, to individual faithfulness and affection. If one is surrounded, on all hands, by true hearted confessors—by a great cloud of witnesses —a large army of good soldiers of Jesus Christ—if the tide of devotedness is flowing around one and bearing him on its bosom, he is not so dependent upon individual sympathy and fellowship.

But, on the other hand, when the general condition of things is low—when the majority prove faithless—when old associates are dropping off, it is then that personal grace and true affection are specially valued. The dark background of general declension throws individual devotedness into beauteous relief.

Thus it is in this exquisite Epistle which now lies open before us. It does the heart good to hearken to the breathings of the aged prisoner of Jesus Christ who can speak of serving God from his forefathers with

pure conscience, and of unceasing remembrance of his beloved son and true yoke fellow.

It is specially interesting to notice that, both in reference to his own history and that of his beloved friend, Paul goes back to facts of very early date—facts in their own individual path—facts prior to their meeting one another, and prior to what we may call their church associations—important and interesting as these things most surely are in their place. Paul had served God, from his forefathers, with pure conscience, before he had known a fellow Christian. This he could continue to do though deserted by all his christian companions. So also, in the case of his faithful friend, he says, "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: and I am persuaded that in thee also."

This is very touching and very beautiful. We cannot but be struck with such references to the previous history of those beloved men of God. The "pure conscience" of the one, and "the unfeigned faith" of the other, indicate two grand moral qualities which all must possess if they would prove true men of God in a dark and evil day. The former has its immediate reference, in all things, to the one living and true God; the latter draws all its springs from Him. That leads us to walk *before* God; this enables us to walk *with* Him. Both together are indispensable in forming the character of the true man of God.

It is utterly impossible to over-estimate the importance of keeping a pure conscience before God, in all our ways. It is positively invaluable. It leads us to refer everything to God. It keeps us from being tossed

hither and thither by every wave and current of human opinion. It imparts stability and consistency to the entire course and character. We are all in imminent danger of falling under human influence—of shaping our way according to the thoughts of our fellow man—of adopting his cue, and mounting his hobby.

All this is destructive of the character of the man of God. If you take your tone from your fellow; if you suffer yourself to be formed in a merely human mould; if your faith stands in the wisdom of man; if your object is to please men, then instead of being a man of God, you will become a member of a party or clique. You will lose that lovely freshness and originality so essential to the individual servant of Christ, and become marked by the peculiar and dominant features of a sect.

Let us carefully guard against this. It has ruined many a valuable servant. Many who might have proved really useful workmen in the vineyard, have failed completely through not maintaining the integrity of their individual character and path. They began with God. They started on their course in the exercise of a pure conscience, and in the pursuit of that path which a divine hand had marked out for them. There was a bloom, a freshness, and a verdure about them, most refreshing to all who came in contact with them. They were taught of God. They drew near to the eternal fountain of holy scripture and drank for themselves. Perhaps they did not know much; but what they did know was real because they received it from God, and it turned to good account for "there is much food in the tillage of the poor."

But, instead of going on with God, they allowed

themselves to get under human influence; they got truth secondhand, and became the vendors of other men's thoughts; instead of drinking at the fountain head, they drank at the streams of human opinion; they lost originality, simplicity, freshness, and power, and became the merest copyists, if not miserable caricatures. Instead of giving forth those "rivers of living water" which flow from the true believer in Jesus, they dropped into the barren technicalities and cut and dry common-places of mere systematized religion.

Beloved christian reader, all this must be sedulously guarded against. We must watch against it, pray against it, believe against it, and live against it. Let us seek to serve God, with a pure conscience. Let us live in His own immediate presence, in the light of His blessed countenance, in the holy intimacy of personal communion with Him, through the power of the Holy Ghost. This, we may rest assured, is the true secret of power for the man of God, at all times, and under all circumstances. We must walk with God, in the deep and cherished sense of our own personal responsibility to Him. This is what we understand by "a pure conscience."

But will this tend, in the smallest degree, to lessen our sense of the value of true fellowship—of holy communion with all those who are true to Christ? By no means; indeed it is the very thing which will impart power, energy, and depth of tone to the fellowship. If every "man in Christ" were only acquitting himself thoroughly as "a man of God," what blessed fellowship there would be! what heart work! what glow, what unmistakable power! How different from the dull formalism

of a merely nominal assent to certain accredited dogmas of a party, on the one hand, and from the mere *esprit de corps* of cliquism, on the other.

There are few terms in such common use and so little understood as "fellowship." In numberless cases, it merely indicates the fact of a nominal membership in some religious denomination—a fact which furnishes no guarantee whatsoever of living communion with Christ, or personal devotedness to His cause. If all who are nominally "in fellowship" were acquitting themselves thoroughly as men of God, what a very different condition of things we should be privileged to witness!

But what is fellowship? It is, in its very highest expression, having one common object with God, and taking part in the same portion; and that object—that portion is Christ—Christ known and enjoyed through the Holy Ghost. This is fellowship with God. What a privilege! What a dignity! What unspeakable blessedness! To be allowed to have a common object and a common portion with God Himself! To delight in the One in whom He delights! There can be nothing higher, nothing better, nothing more precious than this. Not even in heaven itself shall we know aught beyond this. Our own condition will, thank God, be vastly different. We shall be done with a body of sin and death, and be clothed with a body of glory. We shall be done with a sinful, sorrowful, distracting world, where all is directly opposed to God and to us, and we shall breathe the atmosphere—the pure and exhilarating atmosphere of that bright and blessed world above. But, in so far as our fellowship is concerned, it is now

as it shall be then, "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"—"In the light," and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Thus much as to our fellowship with God. And, as regards our fellowship one with another, it is simply as we walk in the light, as we read, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) We can only have fellowship one with another as we walk in the immediate presence of God. There may be a vast amount of mere intercourse without one single particle of divine fellowship. Alas! alas! a great deal of what passes for christian fellowship is nothing more than the merest religious gossip—the vapid, worthless, soul-withering chit-chat of the religious world, than which nothing can be more miserably unprofitable. True christian fellowship can only be enjoyed in the light. It is when we are individually walking with God, in the power of personal communion, that we really have fellowship one with another, and this fellowship consists in real heart enjoyment of Christ as our one object—our common portion. It is not heartless traffic in certain favourite doctrines which we receive to hold in common. It is not morbid sympathy with those who think, and see, and feel with us, in some favourite theory or dogma. It is something quite different from all this. It is delighting in Christ, in common with all those who are walking in the light. It is attachment to Him—to His Person—His Name—His word—His cause—His people. It is joint consecration of heart and soul to that blessed One who loved us and washed us from our sins in His

own blood, and brought us into the light of God's presence, there to walk with Him and with one another. This and nothing less is christian fellowship; and where this is really understood it will lead us to pause and consider what we say when we declare, in any given case, "such an one is in fellowship."

But we must proceed with our Epistle, and there see what full provision there is for the man of God, however dark the day may be in which his lot is cast.

We have seen something of the importance—yea rather we should say, the indispensable necessity of "a pure conscience," and "unfeigned faith," in the moral equipment of God's man. These qualities lie at the very base of the entire edifice of practical godliness which must ever characterize the genuine man of God.

But there is more than this. The edifice must be erected as well as the foundation laid. The man of God has to work on amid all sorts of difficulties, trials, sorrows, disappointments, obstacles, questions and controversies. He has his niche to fill, his path to tread, his work to do. Come what may, he must serve. The enemy may oppose; the world may frown; the church may be in ruins around him; false brethren may thwart, hinder, and desert; strife, controversy, and division may arise and darken the atmosphere; still the man of God must move on, regardless of all these things, working, serving, testifying, according to the sphere in which the hand of God has placed him, and according to the gift bestowed upon him. How is this to be done? Not only by keeping a pure conscience and the exercise of an unfeigned faith—priceless, indispensable qualities! but, further, he has to hearken to the following weighty

word of exhortation—"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

The gift must be stirred up, else it may become useless if allowed to lie dormant. There is great danger of letting the gift drop into disuse through the discouraging influence of surrounding circumstances. A gift unused will soon become useless; whereas, a gift stirred up and diligently used grows and expands. It is not enough to possess a gift, we must wait upon the gift, cultivate it, and exercise it. This is the way to improve it.

And observe the special force of the expression, "Gift of God." In Ephesians iv. we read of "the gift of Christ," and there, too, we find all the gifts, from the highest to the lowest range, flowing down from Christ the risen and glorified Head of His body the church. But in 2 Timothy, we have it defined as "the gift of God." True it is—blessed be His holy name!—our Lord Christ is God over all, blessed for ever, so that the gift of Christ is the gift of God. But we may rest assured there is never any distinction in scripture without a difference; and hence there is some good reason for the expression "gift of God." We doubt not it is in full harmony with the nature and object of the Epistle in which it occurs. It is "the gift of God" communicated to "the man of God" to be used by him notwithstanding the hopeless ruin of the professing church, and spite of all the difficulty, darkness, and discouragement of the day in which his lot is cast.

The man of God must not allow himself to be hindered in the diligent cultivation and exercise of his gift, though

everything seems to look dark and forbidding, for "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." Here we have "God" again introduced to our thoughts, and that, too, in a most gracious manner, as furnishing His man with the very thing he needs to meet the special exigence of his day—"The spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Marvellous combination! Truly, an exquisite compound after the art of the apothecary! Power, love, and wisdom! How perfect! Not a single ingredient too much. Not one too little. If it were merely a spirit of power, it might lead one to carry things with a high hand. Were it merely a spirit of love, it might lead one to sacrifice truth for peace' sake; or indolently to tolerate error and evil, rather than give offence. But the power is softened by the love; and the love is strengthened by the power; and, moreover, the spirit of wisdom comes in to adjust both the power and the love. In a word, it is a divinely perfect and beautiful provision for the man of God—the very thing he needs for "the last days" so perilous, so difficult, so full of all sorts of perplexing questions and apparent contradictions. If one were to be asked what he would consider most necessary for such days as these? surely he should, at once, say, "power, love, and soundness of mind." Well, blessed be God, these are the very things which He has graciously given to form the character, shape the way, and govern the conduct of the man of God, right on to the end.

But there is further provision and further exhortation for the man of God. "Be not thou therefore ashamed

of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." In pentecostal days, when the rich and mighty tide of divine grace was flowing in, and bearing thousands of ransomed souls upon its bosom; when all were of one heart and one mind; when those outside were overawed by the extraordinary manifestations of divine power, it was rather a question of partaking of the *triumphs* of the gospel, than its afflictions. But in the days contemplated in 2 Timothy, all is changed. The beloved apostle is a lonely prisoner at Rome; all in Asia had forsaken him; Hymeneus and Philetus are denying the resurrection; all sorts of heresies, errors, and evils are creeping in; the landmarks are in danger of being swept away by the tide of apostasy and corruption.

In the face of all this, the man of God has to brace himself up for the occasion. He has to endure hardness; to hold fast the form of sound words; he has to keep the good thing committed to him; to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; to keep himself *disentangled*—however he may be *engaged;* he must keep himself free as a soldier; he must cling to God's sure foundation; He must purge himself from the dishonourable vessels in the great house; he must *flee* youthful lusts, and *follow* righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. He must avoid foolish and unlearned questions. He must turn away from formal and heartless professors. He must be thoroughly furnished for all good works, perfectly equipped through a knowledge of the holy scriptures. He must preach the word; be instant in

season and out of season. He must watch in all things; endure afflictions; and do the work of an evangelist.

What a category for the man of God! Who is sufficient for these things? Where is the spiritual power to be had for such works? It is to be had at the mercy-seat. It is to be found in earnest, patient, believing, waiting upon the living God, and in no other way. All our springs are in Him. We have only to draw upon Him. He is sufficient for the darkest day. Difficulties are nothing to Him, and they are bread for faith. Yes, beloved reader, difficulties of the most formidable nature are simply bread for faith, and the man of faith can feed upon them and grow strong thereby. Unbelief says, "There is a lion in the way;" but faith can slay the strongest lion that ever roared along the path of the Nazarite of God. It is the privilege of the true believer to rise far above all the hostile influences which surround him—no matter what they are, or from whence they spring—and, in the calmness, quietness, and brightness of the divine presence, to enjoy as high communion, and taste as rich and rare privileges as ever were known in the church's brightest and palmiest days.

Let us remember this. Every man of God will need to remember it. There is no comfort, no peace, no strength, no moral power, no true elevation to be derived from looking at the ruins. We must look up out of the ruins to the place where our Lord Christ has taken His seat, at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Or rather—to speak more according to our true position—we should look down from our place in the heavens upon all the ruins of earth. To realize

our place in Christ, and to be occupied in heart and soul with Him, is the true secret of power to carry ourselves as men of God. To have Christ ever before us—His work for the conscience, His Person for the heart, His word for the path, is the one grand, sovereign, divine remedy for a ruined self—a ruined world—a ruined church.

But we must close. Very gladly would we linger, in company with the reader, over the contents of this most precious 2 Timothy. Truly refreshing would it be to dwell upon all its touching allusions, its earnest appeals, its weighty exhortations. But this would demand a volume, and hence we must leave the christian reader to study the epistle for himself, praying that the eternal Spirit who indited it may unfold and apply it, in living power to his soul, so that he may be enabled to acquit himself as an earnest, faithful, whole-hearted man of God and servant of Christ, in the midst of a scene of hollow profession, and heartless worldly religiousness.

May the good Lord stir us all up to a more thorough consecration of ourselves, in spirit, soul, and body—all we are and all we have—to His service! We think we can really say we long for this—long for it, in the deep sense of our lack of it—long for it, more intensely, as we grow increasingly sick of the unreal condition of things within and around us.

O beloved Christian, let us earnestly, believingly, and perseveringly cry to our own ever gracious God to make us more real—more whole-hearted—more thoroughly devoted to our Lord Jesus Christ in all things.

MEDITATIONS ON THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

THE MISSION OF ELIEZER.

ABRAHAM'S servant, the steward of his house, having sworn to his master concerning the matter, departed for Mesopotamia, the city of Nahor. (Vers. 9, 10.) Isaac is maintained in the place of separation. and the servant goes forth from the father to seek a bride for the risen heir. He thinks only, speaks only, of the one thing; nothing turns him aside from his one object; his one work. His testimony bears directly on the father and the son. "And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and manservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when he was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath." (Ver. 34–36.) In all this we have a beautiful figure of the mission of the Holy Spirit, who was sent down in fulfilment of the Father's promise, after the Lord's death, resurrection, and return to glory. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John xv. 26.) Eliezer—as we see through this long and exquisite chapter—sought to win the heart of Rebekah by telling her of Abraham's dignity and wealth, of Isaac his son, the heir of all that he possessed, and by presenting the tokens of his grace. And so it is that the Holy Spirit, by the preacher, seeks to win souls to Christ.

He bears testimony to Him as Saviour and Lord, Son and heir of all things. He unfolds the pledges of His love, assures our hearts of being fellow heirs with Him, and thus forms the bride for the heavenly Bridegroom, according to the counsels of God the Father.

But if thou wouldst be used of the Lord, O my soul, as a messenger of mercy, to draw the hearts of sinners to the Saviour, thou wilt do well to study diligently, and to follow closely, the example of Eliezer. He is the expression to thee of one who is chosen, fitted, and used of the Spirit—a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use. His mission is marked by the continued going up of his heart to the Lord in earnest prayer, mingled with thanksgiving. Thus he moves on, step by step, until he receives an answer in the goodness of God, according to the word of Abraham. It is perfectly beautiful to see his entire confidence in God; his entire consecration to the work he had in hand; and when the object of his mission is gained, and the blessing manifested—a heart surrendered to Isaac—he is filled with the spirit of praise and worship. Note also in thy meditations, what one has beautifully said, that "thanksgiving comes before joy." The faithful servant of Abraham refused to eat or drink with the family of Rebekah until he knew their mind as to the one object of his mission. He thought not of rest or ease or pleasure until he received a decided answer. "Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken. And it came to pass,

that, when Abraham's servant heard these words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master." Verse 50–54.

THE HINDRANCES OF NATURE TO THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

Eliezer, like his master Abraham, rose up early in the morning and hastened to obey. His mind was set on the service he had to perform. Rebekah had shewn a willing mind, through grace, to be the bride of Isaac; full decision and action were now expected. But the enemy was lying in wait. He saw how things were working, and he tries one of his most successful stratagems to disappoint the servant and to detain the bride in the country of nature. "And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten [or, as it is in the margin, a full year]. After that she shall go." This might seem very natural, very proper, but it was not of the Spirit of God. The brother and the mother could appreciate the gifts, but not the report. The proposed delay was of Satan, as delays in such matters always are. A willing, ready mind to obey, is one of the Spirit's goodly fruits. The immediate surrender of the heart to Christ when the report is believed, leaves no room for the enemy to work. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; is not

this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Satan disappears and the soul is left alone with Jesus. The eye is up to Him, the heart overflows with His praise, and the lips are repeating, it may be with tears of joy, "I know He died for me, I know His precious blood has washed my sins away; I can trust all to Him now." Thus to confess Christ is to triumph over every foe. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Both are necessary; both are of God. Zechariah iii. 2; Romans x. 10.

There may be little intelligence, as people say, but the soul has found something far better than mere intelligence; it has found Jesus—the Saviour Himself. Cold, reasoning unbelief, may object and say, "But is there not a fear that such an one may fall away when the excitement is over, and bring dishonour on the cause of Christianity?" While the eye is fixed on Christ, and the heart over-flowing with His praise, there is no fear of the soul falling away. The eye must have wandered from its heavenly object, and the heart must have cooled down, before a wrong step could be taken. With a single eye, the path must be straight.

But on the other hand, when the enemy sees the soul wavering, hesitating, though much impressed and really desiring to be decided for Christ, he assails it with his evil thoughts and suggestions, and fills it with doubts and fears. The soul is unguarded by the shield of faith and exposed to his fiery darts. Nothing is more injurious to souls or more disappointing to evangelists than the excuses and delays of unbelief. They may, sometimes, through the craft of the enemy, have an

appearance of prudence or humility, but they should ever be treated as the most ruinous, though the most plausible of Satan's devices. Hence we often hear it said, and said by those who know they are doing wrong, "I would like to be different, to be better, before fully deciding for Christ and making a profession, lest I should afterwards be inconsistent and bring dishonour on the Lord, which would be far worse than if I never had professed at all." So say thousands and tens of thousands, and remain where they are.

Not, alas, that they are concerned for the honour of the Lord, but they are unwilling to break with the world in the many ways it has a hold on them. They will own much as to the importance of eternal things—the thought of hell frightens them—and they will confess freely enough as to the wrongness of delay; but when affectionately entreated to receive the truth now, to be decided now, to open the mouth in confession now, another excuse is found, another reason is given, for continuing where they are for the present; still, they intend to be decided at some future time. This is the old story. "Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten, or a full year; after that she shall go." The enemy, it will be observed, did not propose to keep her altogether from going to Isaac, but only for a time. But what mischief might he not have done during that year, and what changes might have taken place both in Mesopotamia and in Canaan before the end of a full year! This is the subtle snare which he sets for the feet of all gospel hearers. Thousands have been hopelessly ruined by falling into it. It is the terrible pitfall of Satan, out of which comparatively

few escape. The heart grows harder and the ear heavier through the lingerings of unbelief. But time lingers not, death lingers not; both are hastening on to the end when opportunities will be past, and when the voice of mercy shall cease for ever.

Great wisdom and zeal with spiritual discernment are required in the servant to detect the wiles of Satan and the different causes of delay in those with whom he comes in contact. Natural temperament has a great deal to do with the frankness or hesitancy of confession, even where the heart is right; but in most cases, and sometimes underneath the most hopeful appearances, there is a real love of the world at heart and a positive dislike to the Person of Christ, and to the path of separation. Nevertheless the question must be plainly put and pressed: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" . . . . "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." . . . . "Behold I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage." . . . . "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled." (Matt. xxii., Luke xiv., John ix., Acts xvi.) It is perfectly clear from these and other passages, that the servant should endeavour by all ways and means to have the heart fixed for Christ on the same spot where the gospel has been preached; moral compulsion is the Master's orders. But we must leave this subject for the present, and turn to the noble example before us in Eliezer.

"And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away, that I may go to my master." He would consent to no delay;

no putting off; no trifling with a work so important; there must be decision of heart for Isaac; he must have a direct answer, yes or no. The craft of the enemy now appears in Laban and Bethuel shifting the responsibility from themselves to Rebekah. Perhaps her natural timidity, her love of home, the dreary prospect of a desert to cross, will cause her to hesitate, and at least propose a short delay that she may take farewell of all her friends. This might have proved as dangerous as the other, but grace was working in the heart of Rebekah, and her thoughts were engaged with Isaac, so that she was ready with her emphatic, Yes, "I will go." Every snare of the enemy was now broken. Faith triumphed. "And they said, We will call the damsel and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, *I will go.*" This settled every question: the heart was fixed, Isaac was before her, she must go to him, she is willing to be led across the desert, leaving her father's house, to share the possessions of Abraham with his son Isaac.

Here pause a little, and learn a lesson, O my soul, of rarest, richest value. Wouldst thou be successful in winning souls to Christ? Is there anything thou so much desirest in the way of service? Dost thou wonder at the immediate results of Eliezer's mission? Thou needest not. Follow his example, and thou too wilt surely see the happy results of thy mission. But mark his spirit of prayer and thanksgiving. And mark, too, his motives. It was not merely seeking a bride for Isaac, but it was doing the will of his master. Nothing could make him swerve from the word of

Abraham. This is the best of all service—meeting the master's mind.

Let thy path then, I pray thee, be characterized by thanksgiving; and forget not the purpose of the Father, the position of the Son, the mission of the Spirit, the salvation of sinners, and the calling of the church. Surely no service in this world is to be compared with serving the Father's glory in the exaltation of His Son.

"SALVATION."

"Salvation is of the Lord." JONAH ii. 9.

WHAT depth, power, and fulness in the brief passage which we have just culled from the book of Jonah! What a truth it presents to the heart! "Salvation is of the Lord." It is not of man, nor by man. It is divine. There is not one atom of the creature in it, from first to last. If there were the weight of a feather, or the movement of an eyelash of man's doing, in any shape or form, it could not be said—because it would not be true—that "salvation is of the Lord." But, blessed be God, man has nothing to do with it, but to receive it, enjoy it, and walk in the light of it, now and for ever—here and in heaven.

But ere proceeding to unfold the precious word "salvation," we must remind the reader of something very necessary for him to know and remember; and that is that the very fact of God's having provided salvation for man is a plain and unanswerable proof that man is *lost*. There is no getting over this. It may be said to

be an indirect proof; but it is a proof, and one that cannot be gainsayed. Why provide salvation, if man be not lost? For, be it noted, it is not a question of *help*. Mere help will not do! A man may say, "With the help of God I hope to get to heaven when I die." But this implies that he is to co-operate with God in the great business of salvation; and in that case, most clearly, salvation would not be of the Lord; but partly of the Lord, and partly of man. And, moreover, man could never sing that lovely song of the redeemed, "Worthy is the Lamb," inasmuch as he would have to add, "Worthy am I," which were simply blasphemy, and nothing less.

But no; man is lost—totally, absolutely, and irretrievably lost, in himself—lost and perfectly powerless—perfectly incompetent to help himself, in any one way. It must, therefore, be a full, free, and perfect salvation, or nothing at all It must be wholly of God, or it is of no possible use. Every link in the golden chain of salvation must be of divine formation; for if man had to supply a single link, it would, most assuredly, be a missing one.

Has the reader been brought to see this? Have his eyes been opened to see his true condition, as utterly lost—not merely defective in some points, but absolutely lost? Say, reader, has the Holy Ghost led you to see the real truth of the matter, as to your state in the sight of a holy God? Have you been really brought to take your true place as lost? If so, you are in a position to enter into the meaning of the glorious word that forms the heading of this paper.

But it must be a reality—the genuine fruit of the

Spirit's work in your heart and conscience. It will not do to take up the heartless, powerless, worthless, formulary of general profession, and say, "We are *all* sinners." It is an entirely personal matter. It is not "We" but "*I*." We cannot escape in a crowd. When the Holy Spirit deals with the soul—when He sends the arrow of conviction into the heart—when He brings the conscience into the light; then, verily, we are made to feel the intense reality of that wonderful little monosyllable—"*lost*." Then, too, we find that nothing short of a full, free, everlasting salvation will avail for us. Help will not do; we want to be "*saved*." The only word that will do to put over against our true condition as lost, is that most precious little word—saved. The former expresses all that we are in ourselves—all that we are in nature. The latter sets forth all that we are in Christ.

And we are either the one or the other. There is no neutral ground, as to this question. The reader is either lost in himself, or saved in Christ. No doubt, there are heights and depths in our lost condition—heights of folly and depths of depravity—some higher up and some deeper down—various shades, grades, and conditions of lost men, women, and children. So also there are heights and depths in our condition as saved—heights of privilege and depths of spiritual blessedness. But there is not the breadth of a hair between those two conditions—lost or saved. Reader, *where art thou?*

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

WITH THEE IS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

WHO is that weary man, so lone and pale,
Beneath the shade that falls on Jacob's well?
A lowly pilgrim, from the noon-tide heat,
He sitteth there to rest His aching feet—
No more He seems; but heavenly hosts attend
And wait on Him, where'er His footsteps bend,
They looked with wonder when they sang His birth,
The greatest marvel ever seen on earth.
That humble man is Israel's promised King,
Though for His head a crown of thorns they'll bring.
Yes, He Immanuel is, the eternal Word,
Of heaven and earth, of men and angels, Lord.
My soul, tread softly! for 'tis holy ground;
No finite mind can this deep mystery sound,
But worship and adore the wondrous love
That could the blessed God so freely move
Towards thee, a sinner, and an enemy!
Yes, Lord, thou hast revealed this grace to *me*.
But see a woman comes, unconscious who
Sits by the well, and is careless too,
He asks to drink, and coldly she replies,
Yet gazes on the stranger with surprise;
For there was something in His eye and tone,
That ever marked Him as the holy One.
Ah! didst thou dream, poor sinner, that for thee
Thus faint and weary, He's content to be;
That for the joy of giving thee to know
The living fountains from His heart that flow,
The garden's agony, the cross, the grave—
He'll suffer all, His guilty ones to save?
But thou didst know, the grovelling heart was won,
And found a treasure, ere the setting sun,
Thy happiest hour, thou couldst rejoicing tell
That hour of noon, which brought thee to the well,
Alone with Jesus, from His lips to hear
What drew the publicans and sinners near,
The gracious words for which our spirit yearns.
O blessed Lord; we too would sit and learn,
And drink abundantly, yea, drink for ever,
Pleasures of pure delight from God's own river!

CORRESPONDENCE.

64. "S. J. L.," Islington. We do not know of any meeting there.

65. "A. P.," Dublin. We do, most assuredly, judge it to be contrary to God's will for a christian son to enter into partnership with an unconverted father, or *vice versa*. It is an unequal yoke, spite of the natural relationship. A son may serve under a father; but a deed of partnership involves an unequal yoke.

66. "A. E. G.," Brighton. Romans i. 17; iii. 21–26; 2 Corinthians v. 21; Philippians iii. 9, contain a full reply to your inquiry. The believer is made the righteousness of God in Christ. The expression which you use is not to be found in the New Testament. We must weigh the words of holy scripture.

67. "Inquirer," Bradford. While most fully agreeing with all that you advance in reference to the unity of the body, and the immense importance, practically, of that precious truth; we are, nevertheless, most thoroughly assured that "the Lord's body," in 1 Corinthians xi. 29, does not refer to the church, but to the Lord's own body given and bruised for us. We do not see how this can be called in question.

The teaching of the entire context goes, as we judge, to prove that the great subject before the apostle's mind is not the church as the body of Christ—a truth clearly set forth and established in other scriptures—but the body of our Lord, as symbolized by the broken loaf. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me." (Some authorities leave out the word "broken.")

Now, most clearly, "my body," in this passage, does not refer to the church, but to His own body given for us. So also, in verse 27, we read, "Wherefore, who-

soever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Surely, "The body" here does not refer to the church: but to the Lord's own body, given for us.

Upon what principle, then, could we affirm that the inspired apostle abruptly turns, in verse 29, from the Lord's own literal body to His body the church? And, further, when he says, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," does he not mean that we are to discern the Lord's body in what we are eating? "This is my body." Surely, this is not the church. We are not called to discern the church in the *broken* loaf of chapter xi. however we may see it in the *whole* loaf of chapter x. It would, in our judgment, be doing violence to the teaching of the entire passage to apply verse 29 to the church.

68. "C. R. F.," Kent. It was man who subjected creation to vanity, by his act of disobedience. "In hope" belongs to verse 21.

69. "W. S.," Newry. Assuredly the church is on earth. It seems strange to have to affirm so obvious a truth. True it is in ruins; but still earth is its sphere, inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is on earth; and He it is who unites the members to the Head and to one another. Now, while it is quite true that the visible unity of the church is gone, yet are we responsible to "endeavour to keep *the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace," and, in order to this we are to yield our souls to the action of the whole truth of God, whether that truth be found in 1 Corinthians or in 2 Timothy.

True it is, alas! we have to recognize and mourn over the ruin—to confess our own share in that ruin; but we must not lower the divine standard, or surrender a single tittle of divine revelation. It is our holy privilege to walk in the light of the very highest truths, notwithstanding the broken state of the professing body. "Where two or three are gathered together in my

name, there am I in the midst of them." These words set forth the real ground of the assembly. They were uttered before the church was set up; and they will hold good to the end of time. "Scripture cannot be broken." "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

Thanks be to our ever gracious God, He has not left us to walk according to our own vague and desultory thoughts, or the commandments and doctrines of men. He has poured the heavenly light of His own word upon our path, and that gives a certainty, a stability, and a peace ineffable.

70. "S. S.," Stourbridge. We thank you heartily for your most kind and encouraging letter. The Lord be praised!

71. "M. N." If the Lord will, "Short Papers on Church History," are to be published separately.

72. "W. G.," London. The judgment in Matthew xxv. is a sessional judgment of the nations with reference to their treatment of the brethren of Messiah, and that in 2 Thessalonians is summary vengeance executed upon those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must distinguish between sessional and warrior judgment. Matthew xxv. and Revelation xx. 11–15 belong to the former. Christendom and the beast and false prophet belong to the latter. No doubt all who shall be slain in the warrior judgment shall appear in the judgment of the dead, before the great white throne, which will include all the wicked, from the days of Cain down to the last apostate from millennial glory.

73. "M. A. R.," near Abergavenny. Procure a small volume entitled "Studies on the Book of Daniel," to be had of our publisher.

74. "R. C.," Cheltenham. We cannot see any objection to the expression in that precious little hymn, "Oh! what a debt I owe." We judge your difficulty arises from putting a wrong construction upon the word "debt." Surely you would not object to sing that

charming hymn, "A *debtor* to mercy alone;" or those lines of dear Robert Mc Cheyne "Then, Lord, shall I fully know; not till then how much *I owe*." We believe it shall be our joy, throughout eternity, to acknowledge ourselves debtors to the sovereign grace and mercy of our God; nor can we see how this will ever clash with the precious truth that it is the delight and the glory of God to bestow upon us that full and free salvation which is ours in Christ.

75. "G. G.," United States. Your difficulty seems to flow from not distinguishing between the "coming" of the Lord for His people, and the "day" of the Lord. And will you pardon us if we take the liberty of suggesting that we should seek to write on such holy subjects with a little more grace, tenderness, and forbearance? The cause of truth can never be served by harshness or asperity. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" is a wholesome word for our hearts, dear friend. Oh! for more of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ!"

76. "W. A.," Kent. You are quite right, dear friend, as to the proper hope of the church. As to the book you mention, we should advise you to lay it aside altogether, and not perplex your mind any further with its statements. The Lord would have us to be wise concerning that which is good; but simple concerning evil.

77. "E. J. K.," Sudbury. In the resurrection of Christ the serpent's head was bruised. Satan's power is broken, for faith; but we have, according to Ephesians vi. to "stand against his *wiles*." He has no power against the Christian who walks in the Spirit—breathes the atmosphere of the new creation—lives in the power of the new nature—walks by faith. But if we get out of communion—out of "the light," we cannot stand against Satan. May the good Lord ever keep us in the moral security of His own bright and holy presence!

Such is its character—such its moral condition—such its true state as proved by its own deliberately planned and determinedly perpetrated act. And therefore we need not marvel at aught that we hear or see of the world's wickedness, seeing that in crucifying the Lord of glory, it gave the strongest proof that could be given of wickedness and guilt.

It will, perhaps, be said, in reply, the world is changed. It is not now what it was in the days of Herod and Pontius Pilate. The world of the nineteenth century is very different from the world of the first. It has made progress in every way. Civilization has flung its fair mantle over the scene; and, as respects a large portion of the world, Christianity has shed its purifying and enlightening influence upon the masses; so that it would be *very* unwarrantable to measure the world that *is* by the terrible act of the world that *was*.

Reader, do you really believe that the world is changed? Is it really improved in the deep springs of its moral being—is it altered at its heart's core? We readily admit all that a free gospel and an open Bible have, by the rich mercy of God, achieved here and there. We think, with grateful hearts and worshipping spirits of thousands and hundreds of thousands of precious souls converted to God. We bless the Lord, with all our hearts, for multitudes who have lived and died in the faith of Christ; and for multitudes who, at this very moment, are giving most convincing evidence of their genuine attachment to the Name, the Person, and the cause of Christ.

But, after allowing the broadest margin in which to insert all these glorious results, we return, with firm

decision, to our conviction that the world is the world still, and if it had the opportunity, the act that was perpetrated in Jerusalem in the year 33, would be perpetrated in Christendom in 1873.

This may seem severe and sweeping; but is it true? Is the Name of Jesus one whit more agreeable to the world to-day, than it was when its great religious leaders cried out, "Not this man but Barabbas!" Only try it. Go and breathe that peerless and precious name amid the brilliant circles that throng the drawing rooms of the polite, the fashionable, the wealthy, and the noble of this our own day. Name Him in the saloon of a steamboat, in a railway carriage, or in a coffee room, and see if you will not very speedily be told that such a subject is out of place. Any other name, any other subject will be tolerated. You may talk folly and nonsense in the ear of the world, and you will never be told it is out of place; but talk of Jesus, and you will very soon be silenced. How often have we seen our leading thoroughfares literally blocked up by crowds of people looking at a puppet show, or listening to a ballad singer or a German band, and no policeman ever told them to move on. Let a servant of Christ stand to preach in our thoroughfares and he will be summoned before the magistrates. There is room in our public streets for the devil, but there is no room for Jesus Christ. "Not this man but Barabbas."

We ask can any one deny these things? Have they not been witnessed in our cities and towns, times without number? And what do they prove? They prove, beyond all question, the fallacy of the notion that the world is improved. They prove that the world

of the nineteenth century is the world of the first. It has, in some places, changed its dress, but not its real *animus*. It has doffed the robes of paganism, and donned the cloak of Christianity; but underneath that cloak may be seen all the hideous features of paganism's darkest days. Compare Romans i. 29–31 with 2 Timothy iv. and there you will find the very traits and lineaments of nature, in its darkest heathenism, reproduced in connexion with "the form of godliness"—the grossest forms of moral pravity covered with the robe of christian profession.

No, no, reader; it is a fatal mistake to imagine that the world is improving. It is stained with the murder of the Son of God; and it proves its consent to the deed in every stage of its history, in every phase of its condition. The world is under judgment. Its sentence is passed; the awful day of its execution is rapidly approaching. The world is simply a deep, dark, rapid stream rushing onward, in an impetuous torrent, to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Nothing but the sword of judgment can ever settle the heavy question pending between the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and that world which murdered His Son.

Thus it is, if scripture is to be our guide. Judgment is coming. It is at the very door. Eighteen hundred years ago, the inspired apostle penned the solemn sentence that "God is *ready* to judge." If He was ready then, surely He is ready now. And why tarries He? In long-suffering mercy, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance. Precious words! Words of exquisite tenderness and

matchless grace! Words that tell out the large, loving, gracious heart of our God, and His intense desire for man's salvation.

But judgment is coming. The awful day of vengeance is at hand; and, meanwhile, the voice of Jesus, sounding through the lips of His dear ambassadors, may be heard, on every side, calling men to flee out of the terrible vortex, and make their escape to the stronghold of God's salvation.

II. But this leads us, in the second place to look at the cross as the expression of God's heart toward man. If on the cross of our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we read, in characters deep, broad, and unmistakable, the true state of man's heart Godward; in the selfsame cross, we may read, with no less clearness surely, the state of God's heart to manward. The cross is the divinely perfect measure of both.

> "The very spear that pierced thy side,
> Drew forth the blood to save."

We behold, at the cross, the marvellous meeting of enmity and love—sin and grace. Man displayed, at Calvary, the very height of his enmity against God. God, blessed for ever be His name, displayed the height of His love. Hatred and love met; but loved proved victorious. God and sin met; God triumphed, sin was put away, and now, at the resurrection side of the cross, the eternal Spirit announces the glad tidings that, grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. At the cross, the battle was fought and the victory won; and now the liberal hand of sovereign grace is scattering far and wide the spoils of victory.

Reader, do you really desire to know what the heart of God is toward man? If so, go and gaze on that centre cross to which Jesus Christ was nailed, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. True it is, as we have already seen, man did, with wicked hands, crucify and slay the blessed One. This is the dark side of this question. But there is a bright side also, for God is seen in it. No doubt, man fully let himself out at the cross; but God was above him. Yes, above him and above all the powers of earth and hell which were there ranged in their terrible array.

As it was, in the case of Joseph and his brethren; they told out the enmity of their hearts in flinging him into the pit, and selling him to the Ishmaelites. Here was the dark side. But then, mark these words of Joseph: "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me; for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Here was the bright side. But to whom were these wondrous words of grace addressed? To broken hearts and penitent spirits, and convicted consciences. To men who had learnt to say "We are verily guilty." It is only such that can at all enter into the line of truth which is now before us. Those who have taken their true place—who have accepted the judgment of God against themselves—who truly own that the cross is the measure of their guilt—they can appreciate the cross as the expression of God's heart of love toward them—they can enter into the glorious truth that the selfsame cross which demonstrates man's hatred of God, sets forth also God's love to man. The two things ever go together. It is when we see and own our guilt, as

proved in the cross, that we learn the purifying and peace-speaking power of that precious blood which cleanseth us from all sin.

Yes, beloved reader; it is only a broken heart and a contrite spirit that can truly enter into the marvellous love of God as set forth in the cross of Christ. How could Joseph ever have said, "Be not grieved with yourselves," if he had not seen his brethren broken down in his presence? Impossible. And how can an unbroken heart, an unreached conscience, an impenitent soul enter into the value of the atoning blood of Christ, or taste the sweetness of the love of God? Utterly impossible. Joseph "spake roughly" to his brethren at the first, but the very moment those accents emanated from their broken hearts, "We are verily guilty," they were in a condition to understand and value the words, "Be not grieved with yourselves." It is when we are completely broken down in the presence of the cross, seeing it as the perfect measure of our own deep personal guilt, that we are prepared to see it as the glorious display of God's love towards us.

And then and there we escape from a guilty world. Then and there we are rescued completely from that dark, broad, and rapid current of which we have spoken, and brought within the hallowed and peaceful circle of God's salvation, where we can walk up and down in the very sunlight of a Father's countenance, and breathe the pure air of the new creation. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

III. And, now, one word, ere closing this branch of our subject on the cross as displaying the heart of Christ toward God. We can do little more than indicate this

point, leaving the reader to prove its suggestive power, under the immediate ministry of the Holy Ghost.

It is an unspeakable comfort to the heart, in the midst of such a world as this, to remember that God has been perfectly glorified by One, at least. There has been One on this earth whose meat and drink was to do the will of God, to glorify Him, and finish His work. In life and death, Jesus perfectly glorified God. From the manger to the cross, His heart was perfectly devoted to *the* one great object, namely, to accomplish the will of God, whatever that will might be. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." In the roll of God's eternal counsels, it was written of the Son that, in due time, He should come into this world, and accomplish the will of the Godhead. To this He dedicated Himself with all the energies of His perfect being. From this He never swerved the breadth of a hair from first to last; and when we gaze on that centre-cross which is now engaging our attention, we behold the perfect consummation of that which had filled the heart of Jesus from the very beginning, even the accomplishment of the will of God.

All this is blessedly unfolded to us in that charming passage in Philippians ii. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Verse 5–8.

How wonderful is all this! What profound depths there are in the mystery of the cross! What lines of truth converge in it! What rays of light emanate from it! What unfoldings of heart there! The heart of man to Godward—the heart of God to manward—the heart of Christ to God! All this we have in the cross. We can gaze on that One who hung there between two thieves, a spectacle to heaven, earth, and hell, and see the perfect measure of everyone and everything in the whole universe of God. Would we know the measure of the heart of God—His love to us—His hatred of sin? we must look at the cross. Would we know the measure of the heart of man—his real condition—his hatred of all that is divinely good—his innate love of all that is thoroughly bad? we must look at the cross. Would we know what the world is—what sin is—what Satan is? we must look at the cross.

Assuredly, then, there is nothing like the cross. Well may we ponder it. It shall be our theme throughout the everlasting ages. May it be, more and more, our theme now! May the Holy Ghost so lead our souls into the living depths of the cross that we may be absorbed with the One who was nailed thereto, and thus weaned from the world that placed Him there. May the real utterance of our hearts, beloved reader, ever be, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." God grant it, for Jesus Christ's sake!

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

"SALVATION."

(PART II.)

"SALVATION is of the Lord." Precious words! Most precious to all those to whom the Holy Ghost has interpreted the meaning and force of that one little word "*lost*." Only such can really understand them. When Jonah uttered these words, he was, in good truth, as low as any human being could well be. We know, from our Lord's own words, that he was a type of a greater than Jonah; but only in the fact of his being three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. There is the immense difference between the type and the Antitype, that the latter went down into the depths, as an obedient One, on behalf of others; the former went down as the fruit of his own wilfulness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust; Jonah suffered the consequences of his own self-will—his was self-earned sorrow.

This makes all the difference. But, notwithstanding all this, we hear the voice of Jonah sounding in our ears these most blessed words, "Salvation is of the Lord." And this voice reaches us from the very belly of hell. "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped

about my head. I went down to the bottom of the mountains: the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed."

Here, then, we have profound exercises of soul. There is no superficial work in all this—no mere lip profession—no cold formal utterance of religious formularies—no empty generalities. All is intensely real. The soul is actually made to feel something of the awful reality of hell—to taste the bitterness and horror of the outside place—the anguish of being cast out of God's sight—the crushing weight of Jehovah's billows and waves—the very darkness and desolation of the pit of hell.

All this our blessed substitute entered into perfectly—entered into for us—entered into it that we might never know the reality of it. All praise to His peerless Name! He went down into the dust of death. He actually encountered all the billows and waves of God's righteous wrath against sin. He tasted the very bitterness and anguish of the forsaken place—that His people might never taste it. For this we praise Him, and shall praise Him through eternity's countless ages.

But who are they that can most fully and blessedly enter into the glorious result of those priceless sufferings of our adorable substitute? Those who, like Jonah, have entered most deeply into the reality of their

condition as lost, ruined, guilty, undone—those who have been most thoroughly exercised in heart and conscience, under the powerful ministry of God the Holy Spirit, and thus brought to feel and own that they deserve nothing but the everlasting consumings of the wrath of God. We may rest assured of this that the more we feel how near we are to hell, the more we shall praise the grace that has rescued us—the more we realize how thoroughly we have earned for ourselves the wrath of a sin-hating God, the more we shall value and delight in His everlasting favour.

We greatly fear there is a vast amount of superficial work amongst us. Sin is not felt to be that horrible thing that it really is in the sight of God. It is not judged, in the conscience, with sufficient spiritual energy. Hence it is that so many who once seemed to have found peace in Jesus, go back to the world, and throw off even the very profession of Christ. They prove themselves to be merely stony-ground hearers—persons whose natural feelings were stirred under the word; but over whom the plough and the harrow had never really passed.

All this is deeply solemn. It demands the most serious attention of those engaged in the work of evangelization. It is not, need we say it? that the depth of our spiritual exercises has aught to do with our salvation. Most surely not. "Salvation is of the Lord," whether our exercises be deep or shallow. But we are most fully persuaded that those who undergo the deepest ploughings, under the mighty ministry of the eternal Spirit, make the most solid, steady, satisfactory Christians afterwards. There is a deplorable amount of

levity, indolence, and self-indulgence in our midst. We lack depth, seriousness, and self-judgment. It is to be feared that many of us are ready enough to accept salvation as a free gift, without entering, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into what it cost our precious Saviour to make it thus free to us.

Hence it is that we can so readily trifle with sin—so easily make terms with the world—and take up with every vanity and folly that crosses our path. We cannot but believe that if the divine work in the conscience were of a deeper character, our whole christian career would exhibit far more holy gravity, steadiness, and consistency.

In short, we want to enter more fully into the power of the cross. We want to understand its application to our sinful nature, so that we may not so readily give a loose rein to that nature. There is this grand defect in much of our modern preaching and teaching, that the cross is presented as the means of forgiveness of *sins;* but it is not set forth as the condemnation of *sin.*

Now this is a very serious defect indeed; and its result is seen in the light, flippant, frivolous, airy-going style of many amongst us. We are saved from hell—fully, freely, perfectly saved. Thanks be to God for it. But is this all? Does God's salvation merely consist in delivering us from the eternal consequences of our sins? Is there no deliverance from the present power of sin? Yes, blessed be God, there is; for the selfsame cross that has blotted out our sins has condemned sin—crucified our old man—destroyed the body of sin—crucified us to the world, and crucified the world to us.

Thus there are two sides to the great question of salvation, as there are two sides to that cross on which salvation rests. Should we not seek to know both sides? Should we rest in a one-sided view of such a subject? Surely not. We ought diligently to seek a deeper knowledge, a more intense realization, a more practical sense of what is comprehended in that one word "salvation," that so our entire course and character might, in a much fuller degree, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Reader, let us deeply ponder the two sides of God's salvation, the two sides of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the vast difference between the forgiveness of *sins* and the condemnation of *sin*.

MEDITATIONS ON THE CALL OF THE BRIDE.

(Genesis xxii., xxiii., xxiv.)

THE CALL AND JOURNEY OF REBEKAH.

"Wilt thou go with this man?" was the question plainly put to Rebekah; and she readily replied, "*I will go.*" This was faith's answer—the answer of a heart that was already under the power of the call of God. She had heard, she had received, the report of what the God of glory had done for the house of Abraham in the land of Canaan. True, she had not seen Isaac, she had not seen the inheritance, but she believed the report, and accepted the jewels as an earnest of the inheritance, and as the gifts of her espousals. Laban, a worldly man, might have an eye to the jewels of silver and gold that were spread out before him; but

Rebekah had a heart for the land and the people that were yet afar off. She had faith in the testimony of the Spirit of God, by the lips of Eliezer. It was that which made her willing to leave her country, kindred, and her father's house. Nothing else could have separated her from all that which nature holds so dear. But the solemn question now was, not merely accepting Isaac's hand, or sharing Abraham's wealth, but an inheritance of the Lord's providing in Canaan, or of nature's providing in Mesopotamia?

Which will she choose? The one was present and known, the other was distant and future. A long journey lay between the country of nature and the land of promise. Eliezer was a stranger, Isaac was a stranger, and the people among whom she was to dwell were all strangers to her: nevertheless, the report she heard and believed had filled her heart. Her eye was on the blessing of God, and a portion in the land of promise. Precious faith! Home, country, kindred, circumstances, all became as nothing to her when she believed the report concerning the future to be true.

Such is the way of faith in all ages and in every land; it yields a ready obedience to the call of God. Rebekah was now prepared to act in accordance with her own memorable words, "*I will go.*" "And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and she rode upon the camels, and followed the man." Her journey through the lonely desert in company with one who had told her all about Abraham and Isaac, and her future dignity and glory as the son's bride in the better land, is strikingly typical of our path of separation through this

world, under the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit. She was going onward to meet her Isaac; we to meet our heavenly Bridegroom. She had left all; she had nothing now but Isaac in prospect. Nevertheless, with him before her, the wilderness rejoiced; all around was bright with hope. But supposing she lost sight of him for a moment, and became attracted by some other object, her position was that of a homeless, portionless, stranger in a dreary desert. So it is with the church, so it is with the Christian when Christ is lost sight of.

Isaac waits in patience with his father for the return of Eliezer and the fruit of his mission. He comes out *alone* to meditate in the field at the eventide. But to his unspeakable comfort and joy, he returns not *alone.* He meets his approaching bride in the desert, veiled in reverent love and humility. "Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, and took her, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Beautiful picture of confidence in the love of one not yet seen, of going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and of the nuptial glories of the Lamb in the house of many mansions.

Lord, hasten that happy day in thine own good time; and meanwhile, preserve us from the attractions and hindrances of the way; and maintain our souls in uninterrupted communion with the mind of Him who is exclusively heavenly.

And now, my dear reader, may I ask, What is thy portion? What is its character? Earthly or heavenly? Faith's portion or nature's portion? Which? This is

the one, the all-important question. The one is for time, the other for eternity. The one we leave behind us when we die; the other is waiting and ready for us on the other side of death and the grave. The rich man's palace and purple robes with his sumptuous fare, were all, all, left behind him when he died; and not so much as a drop of cold water could he find in hell. He had never thought on the next world, and had made no provision for it, therefore he had only himself to reproach. But this is his agony—self-reproach; and this his despair—no opportunity of changing his position; the gulf is fixed—fixed by God, fixed for ever. The gloom of hopeless despair is the inevitable condition of all who despise a heavenly portion through faith in Christ.

But the poor beggar, who had no palace, no purple robes, no sumptuous fare, no friends; had chosen faith's portion; and when he died he entered into the possession and enjoyment of a rich inheritance on high. There was his estate, there were his palaces, his royal robes, his banquets of love, his feasts of joy, his songs of praise, his Father's house, his Saviour's face, his many friends; and all this for ever and for ever. No cloud will ever interrupt the bright beams of His countenance — the eternal sunshine of that happy land.

"No cloud those happy regions know,
For ever bright and fair;
Nor sin, that source of human woe,
Can ever enter there.

There no alternate night is known,
Nor sun's imperfect ray;

But glory from the eternal throne,
Spreads everlasting day.

Oh! may the heavenly vision fire
Our hearts with ardent love,
Till wings of faith and strong desire
Bear every thought above."

Which then, my dear reader, is to be thy future—thy eternal state? Is it to be one of unmingled felicity, or of unmingled misery? Is it to be with the once rich man in hell, or with the once poor man in heaven? This must now be thy first, thy one question. All others dwindle into utter insignificance compared with this. Is it not strange—more than strange—unaccountable; that any in their sane mind should even hesitate for a single moment as to which? Were it merely a question as to this life, we would cease to wonder. The unbeliever may be as comfortable in this life as the believer, and even appear to enjoy it more; but then, what of the future? to say nothing of the Christian's present peace of mind.

Rebekah had no need to leave her own country and people to find the good things of this life in another land. There was no doubt plenty of wealth in Mesopotamia, and all that nature values. She might have found a bridegroom, a home with every comfort in Padan-aram. Why not? The sons of Esau in after years were dukes, the sons of Jacob were shepherds. Though Abraham was rich and Isaac his heir, she gave up what is called *position*, when she married Isaac. But she valued the blessing of God more than wealth or worldly dignity. She thought of what the *Lord* had done for Abraham in heavenly

blessing; not merely of his temporal prosperity; she was in no need of his riches; it was the report of the God of glory being in some way connected with Abraham and Isaac, and their communion with Him, that had power in her soul. Nothing else could have led her to give up present wealth, comfort, and position in the world, to be a pilgrim and a stranger with merely a tent and an altar. But she chose to be with the people of God that she might share with them His blessing and the coming glory. The future to her was infinitely more than the present. This was faith—faith in God's word, and one of its noblest deeds, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." May God give thee this faith even now, my dear reader, only believe, believe in Jesus now. He is better than the world now; and heaven will be better than hell hereafter.

There are, alas, at this moment, thousands of believers, yes, and true believers in Christ as the Saviour, who cannot, as Rebekah did, give up *position* in the world for Him. They believe in Him who died for them on the cross, and they are saved, thank the Lord; and many of them are very pious; but they know nothing of taking up the cross and following Him as the rejected One by this world. Multitudes in this country bow down and worship this idol, *position*, who would be the first to cry out against the grosser forms of worldliness. Their money they will freely give to feed the hungry and clothe the naked: to pay for missionaries at home, or to send the gospel abroad; in works of philanthropy, and in bettering the condition of the world, they love to have a chief place. But speak of

strangership here, speak of following Christ as rejected by the world and received up into heaven, and you are not understood; and few indeed wish to understand you. It would take them out of their *loved position* both in the world and in the professing church. And, as they say, this peculiar path of separation is not necessary to salvation; and further, as they may do a great deal of good in an evil world, without giving up either their social or ecclesiastical position, they endeavour to persuade themselves that it is right to hold it. But this is to remain in Padan-aram. This is to reject the call of God to leave it, and enter upon a wilderness life, looking for the Lord's coming. Isaac was the dead and risen heir in Canaan; Rebekah must go to him if she is to be a joint-heir of the father's inheritance. But the waste howling desert lay between the two countries, that must be crossed, there was no other way.

To walk according to the mind of Christ in heaven, would surely make us pilgrims and strangers in this world; and we would love to be so. Communion with our blessed Lord in heaven would destroy all relish for the world. It would soon become as a scene of strange sights and sounds to us. Would this please my Lord? Would this be service to Him? would soon become our test for everything. As Rebekah left all in her own country, both its religion and its world, to walk as a stranger with Isaac in Canaan: so the Christian is called of God to leave, by faith, nature's country, both its religion and its world, that he may walk in spirit with Christ in heaven. Rebekah, like the Christian, may forget and fail, but we must speak of her in leaving

Padan-aram, as possessing like precious faith with Abraham and Isaac; and as a noble example in this respect for every Christian to follow.

But one word more with thee, my friend and reader, before parting. We may never meet again in this world. What hast thou said in answer to the beautiful gospel invitation, "Wilt thou go with this man?" Hast thou replied as readily, as decidedly as the bride of old, "I will go?" The Lord in His infinite mercy grant it. This is all—a plain Yes or No, when the Man Christ Jesus is the object before the heart. And however long the anxious soul may be in a state of uncertainty, it must come to this sooner or later; Yes or No. But an eternity of joy or sorrow hangs on the brief Yes or No. Redemption's mighty work is done; Jesus died on the cross; put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; glorified God; rose again from the dead; ascended up into heaven; and there He waits in patience for thy Yes, "I will go;" and for the return of the Holy Spirit with the full fruits of His mission; then the marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated according to the purpose of God to glorify His Son.

Thus thou wilt see, that all who are converted now, are not only saved and have peace with God, but they will ere long share in the nuptial glories of that long-looked-for day. They will not only be present, but they will form part of the "glorious church;" the bride of the Lamb. They have long known His love as manifested on the cross; now they will know it as manifested in glory, and especially in the relation of Bridegroom. What a day that will be even to heaven—long accustomed to scenes of love and glory! The once poor,

pilgrim, Gentile church, owned and honoured in heaven, not only as the bride, but as the wedded wife of the Lamb for ever. The temporary relation of bride has passed into the permanent one of wife. But the youthful bloom and beauty of her bridal day shall never fade before His eye; and the freshness of their first love, with its untold mysteries of ever increasing delight, shall know no change for ever. Wondrous, ineffable, unutterable, unmingled blessedness! Who would not long to be there? Who would hesitate to say "I will go?" This will indeed be heaven—the heaven of heavens to all who believe in Jesus now.

The Lord give thee, my dear reader, to be decided for Jesus *now*—just *now*. All depends upon thy *yes* or *no*. The dread realities of eternity—the nuptial glories of the Lamb or the flames of hell, quiver in the balance. Thy emphatic "I will go," will be like a solid weight in the one scale, and the other will fly up as lighter than vanity. Oh! hesitate not a single moment! Exclaim, "Yes! yes, I will go; I will go!" Think only of the future. Look not around thee. Think not of thy present position, comforts, or friends. Think only of present salvation, and of future glory; of the degradation of being lost; of the honour of being saved; of lying bound with a chain in the depths of hell for ever; of enjoying the liberty of the sons of God, in the realms of glory for ever; of companionship with Jesus; of the gnawings of the worm that never dies.

How few, as thou knowest, are prepared to give up the world at once for the blessed Jesus! therefore plain speaking is necessary. They prefer, like the profane

Esau, a present gratification to the hope of future glory. But their days of pleasure-seeking will soon be past; and then the solemn words of the poet may be engraven on their tomb—

"Thy songs are at an end; thy harp
Shall solace thee no more;
All mirth has perished in thy grave,
The melody that could not save
Has died upon death's sullen wave
That flung thee on this shore.

No God is there: no Christ; for He
Whose word on earth was 'Come:
Hath said, 'Depart;' go, lost one, go,
Reap the sad harvest thou didst sow,
Join yon lost angels in their woe,
The prison is thy home."

Again, in parting, both with the worldly Christian and with the careless sinner; we can only pray, that the fine, bold, unhesitating, ever memorable, "I will go" of Rebekah, may find a happy response in every heart now, and a true reflection in all our ways in future; to the praise and glory of the name of Jesus. Amen.

SAFE GUIDANCE.

Thou! who art dear to me above
All other treasures of my love;
Who, cold and faithless though I be,
Remainest all in all to me!
Belovèd Saviour! tell me where
Thy flock, Thy ransomed flock repose;
Within what sheltering valley fair,
The greenest, sweetest, pasture grows.

And shew me where, in noontide's beam,
They rest them by the stilly stream;
And where the dews, in vesper hours,
Lie coolest on the thirsty flowers!
I dare not turn aside to stray
In other paths, however sweet!
I dare not walk, but in the way
Marked by the traces of *Thy* feet!

In fruitful pastures smooth and bright,
In smiling valleys of delight,
I cannot find thy footprints traced,
But in the rough and dreary waste:
In lonely paths, uncheered and lorn,
Where bitter waters darkly flow;
And where the briar and the thorn
Encompassed round Thy steps of woe.

And shall we tremble, if Thou guide
Thy flock by stormy mountain side?
Is not the sweetest herbage found,
On stony, and on barren ground?
The balmiest herbs for healing grow
In places parched by Summer's heat;
And aromatic odours flow
From balsams bruised by pilgrims' feet.

'Twill soon be past;—a few rough ways,
A few dark nights and languid days,
A few more mountain rills to quaff,
Led by Thy faithful rod and staff:
Then shall Thy blood-washed flock be fed
Within the fold of rest above;
And fathom, at its Fountain Head,
The river of redeeming love!

J. C.

CORRESPONDENCE.

78. "K. P.," Tunbridge Wells. Scripture nowhere teaches that Christ bore the *sins* of the world. Had He done so, then no one could ever be lost. It is utterly impossible that Christ could have borne the sins of anyone, and that one not be saved. In John i. 29, we read, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the *sin* [not sins] of the world." So also, in 1 John ii. we read, "He is the propitiation for *our sins* [that is all believers]; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." The words—"the sins of," ought not be inserted; they really teach the heresy of universal redemption. If Christ be the propitiation for the *sins* of the whole world, then every one must be saved, irrespective of the counsels of God, *and* of the work of the Holy Ghost producing repentance and faith in the soul.

We could not go up to an unconverted man in the street, and tell him that Christ bore his sins on the tree. We could tell him that He put away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself—that the veil is rent—that God has been glorified as to sin by the atoning death of Christ—that the way is open—that the grace of God that bringeth salvation unto all men hath appeared—that whosoever will may take the water of life freely—that the glad tidings of salvation are announced to every creature under heaven—that none are excluded from the range of the glorious gospel—that God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

All this we could freely and fully declare; and then, if through grace the man's heart was really affected—if by the power of the Spirit of God he was led to bow to the testimony, we could further teach him not only that his *sins* were borne by Jesus, but that his sinful nature came to its end on the cross—that his "old man" was crucified—that "the body of *sin* was destroyed"—its power broken—its dominion gone for faith.

If then it be asked, What is the meaning of John i. 29 ? What is the real force of the expression, "taketh away the sin of the world ?" We believe that in order to see the full force of this precious statement, we must look onward to that glorious time when every trace of sin shall be for ever obliterated from God's creation. And, further, as to the present application of the passage, we rejoice to know that Christ has, by His precious sacrifice, laid the righteous foundation of God's acting in grace, mercy, goodness, kindness and patient forbearance toward the world, as a whole, and toward each individual on the face of the earth, from the beginning to the end of time. That in virtue of the cross, God sends His rain upon the just and on the unjust, and pours His sunbeams upon the evil and upon the good. That it is in virtue of the cross that the infidel and the atheist live and move, and have their being. And, finally, that it is on the ground of the atonement of Christ, that the gospel is sent forth into all the world, and sounded in the ears of every creature under heaven.

In short, beloved friend, nothing can be more precise, and at the same time more comprehensive, than the testimony of holy scripture on this great question which you have brought under our notice. You will invariably find that scripture accurately distinguishes between "sin" and "sins;" and when the latter term is used, it is always in reference to God's people—"He gave himself for *our sins*"—"Christ was once offered to bear the *sins* of *many*." He does not say "the sins of *all*." "Who his own self bare *our sins*, in his own body on the tree." That is the sins of His people—of all true believers.

The word of God carefully guards against the heresy of *universal redemption;* while, at the same time, it most clearly establishes the truth of *universal purchase*. Our Lord Christ has a purchased right to the whole universe, and to every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth. Hence we read in 2 Peter ii. of certain "false teachers who privily shall bring in dam-

nable heresies, even denying the Lord that *bought* them." He does not say "that *redeemed* them." He has bought all. He redeems according to the eternal counsels of God. "As thou hast given him power over *all flesh*, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

79. "H. H.," Bradford. One grand objection to a trades union is that it introduces a third party between master and servant which the word of God nowhere recognizes. A master may dismiss his servant; or the servant may leave his master, if so disposed; but for any body of men to attempt to interfere and regulate terms between master and servant is a thing entirely opposed to the teaching of holy scripture.

Furthermore, the christian master is taught in scripture to "give unto his servants that which is just and equal;" but the union interferes with this and insists upon his giving the same advance of wages to an idle incompetent workman as to one who is really worth four times as much.

Finally, for a Christian to join a union or any other club is to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

We look upon a trades union as a most unwarrantable interference with the rights of individual conscience. It usurps an authority without a shadow of scripture foundation. The word of God puts each in his right place, and teaches him how to carry himself therein; and if master and men would but listen to its holy teachings, there would be no need of unions. But alas! they do not; and, no doubt, in many cases, the masters have not been as kind, as generous, or as considerate as they ought, and the men have proved rebellious. Or, on the other hand—for there are two sides to every question—the men have proved idle and unprincipled, and the masters have become severe and exacting. But the Christian, whether master or man, has to walk with God; and to be governed by His word, not by the *fiat* of a trades union.

THE THREE CROSSES.

(PART II.)

HAVING dwelt, for a little, on that marvellous centre cross to which the Lord of Glory was nailed, for our redemption, we shall now turn to the other two, and seek to learn some solemn and weighty lessons from the inspired record concerning the men who hung thereon. We shall find in these two men samples of the two great classes into which the human family is divided, from the beginning to the end of time, namely the receivers and the rejecters of the Christ of God—those who believe in Jesus, and those who believe not. In the first place, it is of the utmost importance to see that there was no essential difference between those two men. In nature, in their recorded history, in their circumstances, they were one. Some have laboured to establish a distinction between them; but for what object it is difficult to say, unless it be to dim the lustre of the grace that shines forth in the narrative of the penitent thief. It is maintained that there must have been some event in his previous history to account for his marvellous end—some redeeming feature—some hopeful circumstance on account of which his prayer was heard at the last.

But scripture is totally silent as to aught of this kind. And not only is it silent as to any redeeming or qualifying circumstance, but it actually gives us the testimony of two inspired witnesses to prove that up to the very moment in the which Luke introduces him to our notice, he, like his fellow, on the other side, was

engaged in the terrible work of railing on and blaspheming the Son of God. In Matthew xxvii. 44, we read that "The *thieves* also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." So also in Mark xv. 32, "*They* that were crucified with him reviled him."

Now, this is divinely conclusive. It proves, beyond all question, that there was no difference between the two thieves. They were both condemned malefactors; and not only so, but when actually on the very confines of the eternal world, they were both occupied in the awful sin of reviling the blessed Son of God.

It is utterly vain, therefore, for any one to seek to establish a distinction between these two men, inasmuch as they were alike in their nature, in their guilt, in their criminality, and in their profane wickedness. There was no difference up to the moment in which the arrow of conviction entered the soul of him whom we call the penitent thief. The more clearly this is seen, the more the sovereign grace of God shines out in all its blessed brightness. "There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And, on the other hand, "There is no difference, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Compare Romans iii. 22, 23 with chapter x. 12.

The only standard by which men are to be measured is "the glory of God;" and, inasmuch as all have come short of that—the best as well as the worst of men—there is no difference. Were it merely a question of conscience, or of human righteousness, there might be some difference. Were the standard of measurement merely human, then indeed some shades of distinction

might easily be established. But it is not so. All must be ruled by the glory of God; and, thus ruled, all are alike deficient. "There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

But, blessed be God, there is another side to this great question. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." The riches of the grace of God are such as to reach down to the very deepest depths of human ruin, guilt and misery. If the light of the divine glory reveals—as nothing else could reveal—man's utter ruin; the riches of divine grace, as displayed in the Person and work of Christ, has perfectly met that ruin, and provided a remedy in every way adequate to meet the claims of the divine glory.

But let us see how all this is illustrated in the striking and beautiful narrative of the penitent thief.

It is very evident that the Spirit of God, in the evangelist Luke, takes up this interesting case at that special point in the which a divine work had really begun. Matthew and Mark present him as a blaspheming malefactor. We can hardly conceive a deeper shade of moral turpitude than that which he according to their inspired record exhibits to our view! There is not so much as a single relieving tint. All is dark as midnight—dark almost as hell; yet not too dark to be reached by the light that was shining straight down from heaven through the mysterious medium of that centre cross.

It is well to get a very profound sense of our true condition by nature. We cannot possibly go too deep in this line. The ruin of nature is complete—of nature in all its phases and in all its stages. If all have not

gone to the same length as the thief on the cross—if all have not brought forth the same fruit—if all have not clothed themselves in forms equally hideous, it is no thanks to their nature. The human heart is a seed plot in which may be found the seed of every crime that has ever stained the page of human history. If the seed has not germinated and fructified, it is not owing to a difference in the soil, but a difference in surrounding circumstances and influences.

The testimony of scripture on this great question, is distinct and conclusive, "There is no difference." Men do not like this. It is too levelling for them. Self-righteousness is cut up by the roots by this sweeping statement of inspiration. Man likes to establish distinctions. He cannot bear to be placed in the same category with the Magdalenes, and the Samaritans and such like. But it must be so, and cannot be otherwise. Grace levels all distinctions, now; and judgment will level them all, by and by. If we are saved, it is in company with Magdalenes and Samaritans; and if we are lost, it will be in company with such likewise. There will, no doubt, be degrees of glory; as there will be degrees of punishment; but as to the real nature and character of the human heart, "there is no difference." "*The heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." What heart? Man's heart—the heart of the writer and the reader of these lines. "For out of *the heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Out of what heart? Man's heart—the heart of the writer and the reader of these lines. These things could not come out of the heart if they were not there; and

if they do not come out in action, it is not because they are not there, but that circumstances have operated to prevent.

Such is the clear and unvarying testimony of holy scripture; and whenever the Spirit of God begins to operate on the heart and conscience of a man He produces the deep sense and full confession of the truth of this testimony. Every divinely convicted soul is ready to adopt as his own these words, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good." Every truly contrite spirit owns the fact of his total ruin. All wisdom's children justify God, and condemn themselves. There is not a single exception; and not only so, but every repentant sinner will, without any hesitation, own himself the chief. All who are really brought under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit will, without any reserve, set their seal—the seal of their whole moral being to the inspired statement, "there is no difference."

Any who hesitate to own this have yet to learn themselves, in the light of the holiness of God. The most refined, polished and cultivated person, if enlightened by the Spirit of God, will readily take his place with the thief on the cross, inasmuch as the divine light shining in upon him, reveals the hidden springs of his being, leads him to see the profound depths of his nature—the roots and sources of things. Thus while relatives, friends and acquaintances—mere onlookers, judging from the surface, may think very highly of his character, he himself, knowing better, because of divine light, can only exclaim, "O wretched man that I am"—"Behold I am vile"—"Woe is me, I am undone"—"I am a sinful man."

These are the proper utterances of a divinely convicted soul; and it is only when we can thus truly and heartily express ourselves that we are really prepared to appreciate the riches of the grace of God as unfolded in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Grace takes up real sinners. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost;" and the more fully I realise my lost estate—my hopeless ruin—my utter wretchedness, the more fully I can enter into the fulness and freeness of God's salvation—a salvation purchased by the blood of the cross.

Hence we see how brightly grace shines in the salvation of the thief on the cross. There can be no possible mistake as to him. Clearly he had no good works to trust in. He had performed no deeds of charity. Of baptism and the Lord's Supper he knew nothing. The rites, ceremonies and ordinances of religion had done—could do nothing for him. In a word, his case was a thoroughly hopeless one, so far as he was concerned. For what could he do! Whither could he turn! His hands and his feet were nailed fast to a malefactor's cross. It was useless to talk to him about doing or going. His hands, while he had the use of them, had been stretched forth in deeds of violence; and now they were nailed to the tree, and could do nothing. His feet, while he had the use of them, had trodden the terrible path of the transgressor; and now they were nailed to the tree, and could not carry him anywhere.

But, reader, note this. Although the poor thief had no longer the use of his hands and his feet—so indispensable to a religion of works—his heart and his

tongue were free; and these are the very things that are called into exercise in a religion of faith, as we read in that lovely tenth of Romans, "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness; and with the *mouth* confession is made unto salvation."

Precious words! How suited to the thief on the cross! How suited and seasonable for every poor helpless, hopeless, self-destroyed sinner! For we must all be saved in like manner as the thief on the cross. There are no two ways to heaven. There is not one way for the religionist, the moralist, the pharisee, and another way for the malefactor. There is but one way, and that way is marked from the very throne of God down to where the guilty sinner lies, dead in trespasses and sins, with the footprints of redeeming love; and from thence back to the throne by the precious atoning blood of Christ. This is the way to heaven—a way paved with love, sprinkled with blood, and trodden by a happy holy band of redeemed worshippers gathered from all the ends of the earth, to chant the heavenly anthem, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

We have said that the heart of the thief was free—yes, free under the mighty action of the Holy Ghost, to turn toward that blessed One who hung beside him—that One whom he had just been reviling, but on whom he could now fix his repentant gaze, and to whom he could now bear the noblest testimony ever uttered by men or angels.

But it is most instructive and interesting to mark the progress of the work of God in the soul of the dying thief. Indeed the work of God in any soul is ever of the deepest possible interest. The operations of the

Holy Spirit *in us* must never be separated from the work of Christ *for us;* and, we may add, both the one and the other are founded upon, and inseparably linked with the eternal counsels of God with respect to us. This is what makes it all so real, so solid, so entirely divine. It is not of man. It is all of God, from first to last—from the first dawning of conviction in the soul until it is introduced into the full orbed light of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. The Lord be praised that it is so! Were it otherwise—were there a single atom of the creature in it, from beginning to end, that one atom would neutralise and destroy the whole, and render it not worth having.

Now in the case of the penitent thief, we discern the first touch of the Eternal Spirit—the very earliest fruit of His sanctifying work, in the words addressed to his fellow, "Dost thou not fear God?" He does not say, "Dost thou not fear punishment?" The sanctification of the Spirit, in every case, is evidenced by the fear of the Lord, and a holy abhorrence of evil, for its own sake. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." There may be a fear of judgment, a fear of hell, a fear of the consequences of sin, without the smallest particle of hatred of sin itself. But where the Spirit of God is really at work in the heart He produces the real sense of sin and the judgment thereof in the sight of God.

This is repentance; let the reader ponder it deeply. It is a grand reality; an essential element, in every case. "God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." (Acts xvii. 30.) There is no getting over this—no setting it aside. Some may seek to do away

with man's responsibility on the plea of his inability to do anything right or good. They may seek to persuade us that it is useless, yea unsound, to call upon men to repent and believe, seeing that men can do nothing of themselves. But the question is, what is the meaning of the words which we have just culled from the apostle's address at Athens? Did Paul preach the truth? Was he sound in the faith? Was he sufficiently high in doctrine? Well then Paul declares, in the clearest and most emphatic manner, that "God commandeth *all* men, *everywhere*, to repent." Will any turn round and say they cannot? Will any venture to deny man's responsibility to obey a divine command? If so, where are they? On very dangerous ground. If God commands all men to repent, woe be to those who refuse to do so; and woe be to those who teach that they are not responsible to do so.

But let us devote a few moments to the examination of this great practical question in the light of the New Testament. Let us see whether our Lord and His apostles called upon men—"all men—everywhere, to repent."

In the third chapter of Matthew's gospel, we read, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It will, perhaps, be said that John addressed himself specially to Israel—a people in recognised relationship with Jehovah—and hence this passage cannot be adduced in proof of the universal and abiding necessity of repentance. Well we merely quote it here in order to shew that man, whether Jew or Gentile, is responsible

to repent, and that the very first voice which falls upon the ear, in the time of the New Testament, is heard calling sinners to repentance. Was the Baptist right or wrong? Was he trespassing upon the domain of sound doctrine when he summoned men to repent? Would some of our modern theologians have called him aside, after he was done preaching, and taken him to task for deceiving men by leading them to suppose that they could repent? We should like to have heard the Baptist's reply.

But we have the example of a greater than John the Baptist, as our warrant for preaching repentance, for in Matthew iv. we read, "From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Dare any one turn round and say to the Divine Preacher, "We cannot repent. We have no power. We are not responsible!" Ah! no; men may argue and reason, and talk theology; but there stands the living record before us—Jesus called upon men to repent, and that, too, without entering, in any way, upon the question of man's ability here or there. He addressed man as a responsible being, as one who was imperatively called to judge himself and his ways, to confess his sins, and repent in dust and ashes. The only true place for a sinner is the place of repentance; and if he refuses to take that place, in the presence of divine grace, he will be compelled to take it in the presence of divine judgment, when repentance will be too late. "God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent."

Passing on to the opening of the Acts of the Apostles, we are privileged to hearken to Peter's great

sermon on the day of Pentecost—the most fruitful sermon ever preached in this world—a sermon crowned with the glorious result of three thousand souls! And what did Peter preach? He preached Christ and he called upon men to repent. Yes, the great apostle of the circumcision insisted upon repentance—self-judgment—true contrition of heart before God. "Then said Peter unto them, Repent, and be baptized *every one of you* in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.) And, again, "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Chapter iii. 19.

Was Peter right in calling upon men to repent and be converted? Would any one be justified in saying to him, at the close of his preaching, "How can men repent? How can they be converted? They can do nothing. They are not responsible." We should vastly like to hear Peter's reply. One thing is certain, the power of the Holy Ghost accompanied the preaching. He set His seal to it, and that is enough. "God commandeth *all men, everywhere,* to repent." Woe to all who refuse.

We have already referred to the preaching of the blessed apostle of the Gentiles, and the great teacher of the church of God. He himself, referring to his ministry at Ephesus, declares in the audience of the elders, "I kept back nothing that was profitable, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 20, 21.) So

also, in his marvellous address to Agrippa, he says, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Thus we have a body of evidence, drawn from scripture, such as cannot be gainsayed, proving the universal and abiding necessity of repentance. "God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." There is no avoiding this. Let men beware how they set it aside. No system of theology can be sound that denies the responsibility of the sinner to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

We have digressed; but the digression was needful, and we hope, in our next issue, to return to our theme.

PEACE AND PROGRESS.

THERE are two great practical questions which imperatively demand, as they, most assuredly, deserve, the attention of every serious, thoughtful person. The first question is, What is the basis of peace? The second, What is the secret of progress? We do not mean to enlarge, but merely offer a hint or two.

And, first, as to the true basis of peace, how very few, comparatively, know it and possess it for themselves! How few amid the millions who throng the so-called churches, chapels, preaching rooms, and lecture halls, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, can truly say, "I am at peace with God."

Everywhere one sees unrest, uncertainty, dimness and cloudiness. There are, on all hands, unsettled questions, unsolved difficulties, doubts, fears, misgivings. Heart's ease is not known. There are vague hopes, undefined desires and aspirations; but no rest, no settled assurance, no divine certainty. The basis of peace is unknown. There are, at this moment, hundreds of thousands who, in reference to the simple question of peace, are completely at sea. There are vast numbers of the professed teachers of religion who do not themselves enjoy the peace of God in their souls—cannot say, with sweet, cloudless, christian confidence, "My sins are all forgiven. I have gotten an unblotted title, an unclouded prospect, an unchanging Friend." In many cases, alas! it is actually taught as orthodox doctrine that no one can know, at this side of the grave, that his sins are forgiven—that it is presumption for any one to think so—and that the true and proper christian state is a state of wholesome uncertainty and doubt—that it keeps us humble and hopeful—that too much confidence would minister to a spirit of pride.

Now all this seems perfectly marvellous to any one accustomed to breathe the atmosphere of the New Testament. If we range through all the epistles, from beginning to end, we cannot find such a thing as a Christian not knowing that his sins are forgiven. It is assumed as the necessary consequence of being a Christian. Thus we read, "In whom *we have* redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.)

Such is the uniform teaching of the epistles. A Christian not knowing the forgiveness of sins is something perfectly anomalous. We speak not now of quickened souls, whose cases are recorded in the gospels, or of the case treated of in Romans vii. We refer to the condition of Christians as presented in the epistles, and we maintain that such a thing as a Christian doubting the forgiveness of his sins is wholly unknown. A state of doubt and uncertainty is not a christian state at all. Many professing Christians are in this state; but it is not the proper state of a Christian. A soul in doubt does not know, does not possess and enjoy, the basis of peace.

It will be well for the reader, in view of the almost universal condition of things around him, to look this question straight in the face, and to see what answer he himself can return to it. Let him settle it in his mind, as a fact established in the clearest manner, in the word of God, that a state of doubt, uncertainty, or unbelief, is, most assuredly, not Christianity at all. That the proper christian state is one of calm confidence, sweetest peace, quiet assurance, and rest—not a cloud above, nor a spot within. And hence the sad condition of souls—the muddle and jumble in which they are involved is the result of Christendom's false teaching and profound ignorance of the simple gospel of the grace of God. God's gospel could never leave the soul in doubt or darkness—never, no, never. That most precious gospel, wherever received, gives the knowledge and absolute certainty of salvation; and, therefore, wherever this knowledge, this certainty, is not possessed, God's gospel is not known.

We do not mean to say that there is not divine life. We believe there are thousands of the beloved children of God who do not possess the blessed certainty that their sins are forgiven; who do not know that they have eternal life; are not resting in calm assurance on the true, the divine, basis of peace.

And here we may be asked, "What is the true basis of peace?" We reply, in one brief sentence, *it is the acceptance of a full Christ for the heart.* It is utterly impossible for any one to enjoy settled peace until his heart has believingly accepted a full Christ; and it is equally impossible for any one thus to accept a full Christ, and not have settled peace.

Reader, see that you understand this. It is of far more importance than any words of ours can set forth. Do apply your heart to it now. Have you accepted a full Christ? Are you satisfied with Him? Yes, with Him, apart from all your doings, your thinkings, your feelings, your evidences? Are you satisfied with, and resting in, Christ *alone?* If so, you know the basis of peace.

And now, one word as to the secret of progress. It is most certain that there can be no progress until the soul is at peace. So long as I am tossed about with all sorts of fears and doubts, questions and difficulties; so long as I am halting, wavering, and fluctuating, real progress is out of the question. There may be progress *towards* the christian starting-post, but no progress *from* it until I have found the basis of peace; for that basis is, beyond all question, the only true starting-post for the Christian.

What, then, is the true secret of progress? It is

closely allied with the basis of peace. What is it? *It is the surrender of a whole heart to Christ.* Yes, reader, thus it stands in this weighty matter. Wouldst thou know peace? Accept a full Christ for thy poor troubled heart. Wouldst thou make progress? Surrender thy whole heart to Christ. Give up the world —give up *your* position—*your* reputation—*your* field of usefulness—*your* religious character—everything, in short, that has *your* attached to it; and make a full surrender of your heart to Christ. Then you will understand both "*peace and progress.*"

"NOT DYING—I'M GOING TO LIVE."

THE mere dry doctrines of what theologians and reasoners call "the full assurance of faith, and the final perseverance of the saints," are widely different things to the calm repose of a soul which has found its home and rest in the presence of God. Here the heart is not reasoning about the measure of its faith or the certainty of its continuance; but it is simply enjoying what God Himself is in Christ Jesus. It is not so much what He has said or what He has done, as what He is in Himself: though what He has said and done leads, or has led, the heart to find all its rest and resource in Him.

There is a great difference between a doctrine, however true, and the living Person of the risen Lord. The heart can never find its home and rest in a doctrine, an inference, however fair or plausible; it must have the full assurance and enjoyment of a love that

can never change. The very thought of the possibility of a change would be torment. The changeless love of Christ is the only resting place of the human heart. Nothing but love will ever satisfy love; but when the heart rests and delights in His love, all fear of falling away, or of not persevering to the end, is unknown,—unfelt. The great thought of the heart is, He Himself is mine, and I am His. He has brought me to Himself, and fitted me for Himself, as the answer to the desires of His own heart. And now, He is satisfied, and I am at rest. But what am I to be thinking about? My faith, my conversion, my feelings, my doings, my perseverance, God forbid! Surely, I have only to think of Him, look to Him, delight in Him, speak of Him, and speak to Him. The whole of my christianity, as it were, has resulted in the knowledge, the possession and the enjoyment of the one who loved me and gave Himself for me. There is no higher, no further flight of faith than this. But lower, there is no resting place. There was no resting place for Noah's dove, not even where she could fold her wings, until she returned to the ark. Neither is there a spot in the vast universe of God, where faith can fold her wings in perfect rest but the heart of Christ.

The knowledge of the truth, of course, and especially the knowledge of the finished work of Christ, are necessary to the knowledge of Himself, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. But all these are as means to an end—the full knowledge of Himself. We must know the value of His work, before the heart rises into the one desire of knowing Himself. "That I may know Him," says Paul; and as John says, "There is

no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment." It is the knowledge of His perfect love, a love that has its spring and power in Himself, and above the influence of our failures and shortcomings, that delivers the soul from all fear, and fills it with a holy boldness under all circumstances. The feeling is no longer what I am or may be, at some future time, but what He is. Will He ever change? Will His love ever cool down? Can He ever lose His place in heaven? Thus the heart finds perfect rest in His presence, being in Him, and one with Him; and a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

These thoughts have been suggested by reflecting on the weary wrangling of reasoners about "full assurance;" "falling away;" and "final perseverance;" and the triumphant death-bed of a beloved christian who found her delight in the Person of her Lord. The Christ-like calmness and dignity of her last hours may be a better answer to all such reasonings than anything we could say. We give in substance the closing scene.

The usual medical visit was paid. The illness had been long, and no doubt the visits had been many, but the last had come. The change was apparent. Turning to a sister who stood in the room, he quietly said, "She is dying." He was a friend of the family as well as the doctor, and sympathized with the sorrowing friends. But there was one ready to comfort them all. The words, "She is dying," reached her ear; but they conveyed no alarm to her soul; all was peace; and making a slight effort to look at her friend, she calmly replied, "Not dying, doctor—I'm going to live—No,

not dying,—this is living—I'm going to live with Jesus." And with great presence and composure of mind, she expressed her gratitude to the doctor for all his attentions and kindness, and assured him that she felt he had done all that man could do; and in bidding him farewell, she prayed that God might bless him and bless his family. "May God bless you, doctor, and may He bless your family," were amongst the last words of his patient, but they were more than he could stand; he left the room in a state of the deepest emotion. He returned next day to see her asleep in Jesus, and speak of the blessing he had received.

Her work was now done. Like her Lord and Master, she passed off the scene with hands uplifted in blessing. She had been many years a Christian, and moved in what would be called the best society, so that there was no mere excitement in all this, but the calm and solid reality of a well instructed and highly cultivated mind. Of course it was the grace of God and that alone which enabled her to bear such a testimony for the truth and for Christ; but it was the sweet sense of His presence with her in that chamber of suffering and death which filled her whole soul with such peace and rest. He was with her, and that was enough. The strength of His arm, the beams of His countenance, as well as the love of His heart, were all her own. She is absent from the body, she is present with the Lord. She has joined the myriad throng above, quietly to wait with them and Him, the day of His coming glory. We shall meet in the morning—that morning of cloudless, eternal joy. Till then may we cease from self, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and seek the blessing of others.

I rest in Christ the Son of God,
Who took the servant's form;
By faith I flee to Jesus' cross,
My covert from the storm.

At peace with God, no ills I dread,
The cup of blessing mine;
The Lord is risen, His precious blood
Is new and living wine.

Jesus put all my sins away,
When bruised to make me whole;
Who shall accuse, or who condemn,
My blameless, ransomed soul?

GLEANINGS.

We have all in Christ.—Did we but enter, with a more artless faith, into the truth that there is a real *Man—the Man Christ Jesus, One whose sympathy is* perfect, whose love is fathomless, whose power is omnipotent, whose wisdom is infinite, whose resources are exhaustless, whose riches are unsearchable, whose ear is open to our every breathing, whose hand is open to our every need, whose heart is full of unspeakable love and tenderness towards us—how much more happy and elevated we should be, and how much more independent of creature streams, through what channel soever they may flow! There is nothing the heart can crave which we have not in Jesus. Does it long for genuine sympathy? Where can it find it, save in Him who could mingle His tears with those of the bereaved sisters of Bethany? Does it desire the enjoy-

ment of sincere affection? It can only find it in that heart which told forth its love in drops of blood. Does it seek the protection of real power? It has but to look to Him who made the world. Does it feel the need of unerring wisdom to guide? Let it betake itself to Him who is wisdom personified, and "who of God is made unto us wisdom." We have all in Christ.

Where you see something wrong in your fellow-men go with it to the Lord, and tell Him of it as if you had done it yourself. That would be so much better than proclaiming it to others; while you are doing the *latter* you might have been praying to the Lord.

No amusement is innocent which takes away the soul from Jesus, or does what it can to take it away. To breathe in the atmosphere of the world is one thing; *breathe it* is a thing quite different. Breathe *in* that element I must, else I should not be *in* the world; but breathe *it*, oh! that I never may, else I should be *of* the world.

Faith looks back at the cross and is at peace, it looks *forward* and pants for glory.

If Christians ever meet to do, or say, what they cannot engage in doing, or saying, in the name of Christ, it were better for them not to meet at all; for the scripture says, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

They who always get help just at the right time are those who never study *circumstances*, but who look in steadfast faith to God, expecting Him to act for and aid them.

The proper standpoint is to look at everything for the glory of God; you are to hold fast your heart's confidence in the unchanging love of God in Christ, come what may.

A saint's highest glory is, that he is not merely in the house of the great King, but *one with Him*, and therefore connected with His glory. We all in some measure see this as *future*; but what I see is, that we are in this wonderful relationship to Christ *now*. We are of His body, of His flesh and of His bones; and it ought to be a matter of deeper interest to us to carry out and maintain the identification with Him, while we are where He is rejected and refused, than it will be to display it in the age to come, where there will be no one to deny Him, or to refuse Him His title. I believe that if each of us felt individually the dignity and gravity of our calling here as a member of Christ's body, we should make other things secondary to it.

"Straight is the path of duty;
Curved is the path of beauty;
Follow the first, and thou shalt see
The last shall ever follow thee."

"Time was, is past, thou canst not it recall.
Time is, thou hast, improve the portion small.
Time future is not, and may never be,
The present is the only time for thee."

"PURE RELIGION."

(James i. 27.)

Let pure religion, undefiled,
Be the path of God's own child.
To walk unspotted before Him;
To dry the eyes with sorrow dim.
To speak to her whose stay is gone,
That she may lean on God alone,
And tell her of the heart of love,
Who watches over all above!

Let pure religion, undefiled,
Shelter still the orphan child,
That he may thus the Father know,
Who sent His Son on earth below.
To seek the hopeless, helpless, lost,
The soul by sin and Satan tost
Upon the stormy sea of sin,
To rest with Him, to rest within,—

To rest within—to rest with God—
To lean upon His staff and rod;
His home and heart to fully share,
Who calls the widow, orphan, there,
And bids them come in Jesu's name,
Who died for this the death of shame,
That they might from the world be free,
And rest in God's own liberty.

O tender love of Christ in God,
Who bore for us the smiting rod—
The rod of His most righteous hand—
Bore it all, that we might stand
Within His presence bright and clear,
And know His joy the song to hear.
All honour, praise, and glory be
Unto Him who set us free!

T. M.

CORRESPONDENCE.

80. "J. L.," Forest Hill. We could not recommend the printing of your lines; though we have no objection to offer to the use you make of the incident.

81. "R. S.," Purton. The "other sheep" of John x. 16, are those to be gathered in from the wide Gentile world, to form, with the sheep of the Jewish fold, "one *flock*." The moment had not yet arrived for any reference to the "one body." The middle wall of partition had to be broken down, by the cross. Our blessed Lord had to rise from the dead, to ascend into the heavens, to take His seat in majesty and glory, to send down the Holy Ghost in order to baptize believers —Jews and Gentiles—into one body.

82. "J. G. B.," Westminster. The rendering of Romans iii. 22 is sufficiently clear in our Authorized Version. Some authorities omit the particle δὲ, and thus render the passage, "Righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto (or towards) all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference." We can see no object in substituting the word "but" for "and." As to the aspect of the righteousness, it is unto or towards all. As to the final result, it is upon all them that believe.

83. "Inquire," Richmond. Your question is entirely one of individual conscience and spiritual judgment. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind, remembering that whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

84. "A.," London. Your case is truly most sad and humiliating. We have never met its parallel, though we have met with many terrible cases. It will, no doubt, cause you to walk softly all the rest of your days in this world. Still, blessed be the God of *all* grace, it is not beyond His reach. He can restore the soul even from deeper depths than those into which you have plunged. The grace of God, the blood and advocacy of Christ, the powerful ministry of the eternal

Spirit can reach—yea, we trust, have reached—your case. We trust you are in a truly repentant state of heart, and such a state is the sure precursor of divine restoration. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Here is the provision of divine grace. May you know its efficacy! We deeply feel for you. The heart could bleed for you. God forbid we should pen one harsh sentence, or inflict an additional wound on your already deeply wounded spirit. We do not consider that there is any need to expose your case, seeing you have truly confessed and forsaken your sin. The grand object of the discipline of the assembly is to maintain the holiness of the Lord's table, by putting away known evil—evil in its active energy. The secondary object is to deliver the sinning one from the power of evil, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. In your case, God in His mercy has come in and led you into true self-judgment, and enabled you to put away the evil, so that the assembly is not involved. But O dear friend, let us solemnly exhort you to walk watchfully and keep under *your body*.

85. "E. B.," Brighton. Your kind note has come to hand, for which please accept our best thanks. Accept a very precious motto which we trust may be made a blessing to your soul, in the midst of your varied exercises; it is this, "the just shall *live by faith*." May the Lord's own peace be with you!

86. "M. S. S.," Dublin. Accept our warmest thanks for your letter and the accompanying lines.

87. "F. W.," Tetbury. Thanks for your kind communication.

88. "A. E. G.," Brighton. We do, most heartily, bless God for your letter. His holy name be praised! May He fill you with His own precious love, so that you may praise Him continually. As to Matthew xii. 31, we have often referred to it. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost consisted in attributing to Beelzebub

the works done by the Eternal Spirit. How could it possibly "apply to a believer?"

89. "F." and "H.," Derby. In Romans viii. 13, the expression, "Ye shall die," and "Ye shall live," are not similar in the original. The former is a contingent, the latter, an absolute proposition. "If ye live after the flesh ye are about to die" (μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν); "But if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (ζήσεσθε). To live after the flesh is the highway to death; let us beware of it, and never tread it. As to verse 9, all true believers—all who belong to Christ—have His Spirit. Hence, if any have not the Spirit, they are none of His. And, most surely, we may add, those who have the Spirit can understand and prize His precious witness. Can a child understand the sweet whisperings of a mother's love? They must be heard to be understood; but did ever any child who had heard them ask "How am I to know them?" We can hardly think so.

90. "W. B.," Herne Bay. It will help you in the understanding of the blessed teaching in John xiii. 1–10, if you will refer to the washing of the priests, under the law. On the great day of their inauguration, they were wholly washed. This action was never repeated. But, for daily service, they needed to wash their feet and hands in the brazen laver, in the tabernacle; or the brazen sea in the temple. Now, the first of these actions typified "the washing of regeneration," which, we need hardly say, is never repeated. The second sets forth the daily washing of sanctification, which is never interrupted. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." All is founded, blessed be God, on the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ—the only basis of life, salvation, blessing, and glory, for poor sinners such as we. The blood that expiates, and the water that cleanses, both flow from the side of a crucified Saviour. All praise and adoration to His peerless Name!

It is beautiful to mark the varied lines of truth in scripture; and, moreover, it is important that the soul be governed, and the character formed, by *all truth*, and not by some special line of truth. Thus it is divinely true that we are "once purged" by the *blood* of Jesus, and our bodies are to be washed with pure *water*. In other words, we have the blood for the conscience; the basin for the feet; and, we would just add, blessed be God, the bosom for the head. So, also, we are quickened, or born again, by the word; and we are cleansed by the word. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his *way?* By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Such is the infinite fulness, depth, variety, freshness, and power of the word of God! May we prize it more and more! Accept our hearty thanks for your kind and cheering letter.

91. "An Enquirer," Bantry. We have no recollection of receiving any such communication, nor can we find it amongst our correspondence. You can form no idea of the mass of letters which come to hand from all quarters, and on all sorts of subjects. The fact is, it would be utterly impossible to reply to the half. Our friends must kindly bear with us, and remember that we seek to reply to their communications as time and space permit, and according as we deem them likely to be generally useful.

92. "D.," Middleton. Unquestionably, 1 Corinthians x. 17 teaches that one unbroken loaf should be laid on the Lord's table. It is beautifully expressive of the unity of the body. With regard to your second question, we are most fully assured that for a Christian—a true believer—a child of God to join a "Good Templars' lodge," is to form an unequal yoke; and as to the idea of being able to do good by such a step, the question is, are we to do evil that good may come? Surely not. To obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams. And, besides the positive evil involved in an unequal yoke, how can any follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, the self-emptied, obedient, de-

pendent man, be a member of an "*Independent* Order?" And how can any one who knows aught of his own vileness, weakness, and nothingness, style himself "a *Good* Templar," or a good anything? And, further, we would ask, how can any one who understands aught of his personal responsibility to Christ, surrender his individuality by becoming a member of a club? If I join a club, or a society, I merge my personality in that club, while, at the same time, I am morally responsible before God and man for all the actings of that club. In fact, the whole thing, root and branch, is false. Cannot a Christian be temperate without joining a club? Are the claims of a club more powerful than the claims of Christ? True "temperance" is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and grows only in the new creation. I must be in the new creation to produce it; and, if there, I do not want to join a club. We know no club, no society, no association, but the church of God, the body of Christ, into which all true believers are incorporated by God the Spirit; and, being so incorporated, they are to be governed, in all things, by the word of God; and that word emphatically tells us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers for any purpose whatever. Oh! that we trembled more at the word of God! One of the most appalling features of the present day is the deliberate setting aside of the very plainest statements of the word of God. Men seem to have no idea of submitting absolutely to the authority of Holy Scripture. We solemnly warn all Christians to look seriously to this matter. Let us remember that our God has uttered such words as these: "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and TREMBLETH AT MY WORD."

THE THREE CROSSES.

(Part III.)

The case of the penitent thief furnishes a very fine illustration of Peter's weighty sentence, "Repent and be converted." It teaches us in a clear and forcible manner, the true meaning of repentance and conversion —two subjects so little understood—so sadly clouded by false teaching.

The human heart is ever prone to take divine things by the wrong end; and when false theology combines with this tendency of the heart, by presenting things in a one-sided manner, the moral effect upon the soul is something terrible. Hence it is that when men are called upon, in the gospel message to repent and turn to God, they think it needful to set about doing something or other, in the shape of reading, praying, and attending upon the ordinances and offices of religion, so called. Thus they become occupied with their doings instead of judging their state.

This is a fatal mistake—the result of the combined influence of self-righteousness and bad theology—these fruitful sources of darkness and misery to precious souls, and of serious damage to the truth of God.

It is perfectly marvellous to note the varied forms in which self-righteousness clothes itself. Indeed so varied are these forms that one would scarcely recognize it to be what it really is. Sometimes it looks like humility, and speaks largely of the evil and danger of being too presumptuous. Then again, it assumes the garb and adopts the language of what is called experi-

mental religion, which, very often, is nothing more than intense self-occupation. At other times, it expresses itself in the thread-bare formularies of systematic divinity—that stumbling block of souls and the sepulchre of divine revelation.

What then is repentance? It is in one of its grand elements, the thorough judgment of self—of its history and its ways. It is the complete breaking up of the entire system of self-righteousness and the discovery of our complete wreck, ruin and bankruptcy. It is the sense of personal vileness, guilt and danger,—a sense produced by the mighty action of the word and Spirit of God upon the heart and conscience. It is a hearty sorrow for sin, and a loathing of it for its own sake.

True, there are other features and elements in genuine repentance. There is a change of mind as to self, and the world, and God. And further, there are various degrees in the depths and intensity of the exercise. But, for the present, we confine ourselves to that deeply important feature of repentance illustrated in the touching narrative of the penitent thief, which we may term, in one word, self-judgment. This must be insisted upon constantly. We greatly fear it is sadly lost sight of in much of our modern preaching and teaching. In our efforts to make the gospel simple and easy, we are in danger of forgetting that "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The sinner must be made to feel that he is a sinner—a lost sinner—a guilty sinner—a hell-deserving sinner. He must be made to feel that sin is a terrible thing in the sight of God—so terrible that nothing short of the death of Christ could atone for it—so terrible, that all who die unpardoned

must inevitably be damned—must spend a dreary, never ending eternity in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

Is there, then, anything meritorious in repentance? Is there anything to build upon or to boast in? Has it aught to do with the ground of our salvation, our righteousness, or our acceptance with God? As well might we enquire if the consciousness of bankruptcy could form the basis of a man's credit or future fortune. No; no, reader, repentance, in its deepest and most intensified form, has nothing to do with the ground of our pardon. How could the sense of guilt have aught to do with the ground of pardon? How could the feelings of a drowning man have aught to do with the life boat that saves him? Or the agonies of a man in a house on fire have aught to do with the fire-escape by which he descends from the burning pile?

Look at the case of the thief on the cross. Hearken to his words. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? *And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds.*" Here are the accents of a genuine repentance, "we indeed justly." He felt and owned that he was justly condemned—that he was reaping only "the due reward of his deeds." Was there anything meritorious in this? By no means. It was the judgment of himself—the condemnation of his ways—the sense of his guilt. And this was right. It was the sure precursor of conversion to God. It was the fruit of the Spirit's work in his soul, and enabled him to appreciate God's salvation. It was the hearty acknowledgment of his own just condemnation; and most surely this could, in no wise, contribute to his

righteousness before God. It is utterly impossible that the sense of guilt could ever form the basis of righteousness.

Still, there must be repentance; and the deeper the better. It is well that the plough should do its work in breaking up the fallow ground, and making deep the furrows in which the incorruptible seed of the word may take root. We do not believe that any one had ever to complain that the ploughshare entered too deeply into the soul. Nay, we feel assured that the more we are led down into the profound depths of our own moral ruin, the more fully we shall appreciate the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe.

But, be it well understood, repentance is not doing this or that. What did the thief do? What could he do? He could not move hand or foot. And yet he was truly repentant. He is handed down, on the page of history, as "the penitent thief." Yes, he was penitent; and his penitence expressed itself in the unmistakable accents of self-judgment. Thus it must ever be. There must be the judgment of sin, sooner or later; and the sooner the better; and the deeper the better.

And what then? What is the divine order? "Repent, and be converted." "Repent, and turn to God." Beauteous order! It is conviction and conversion. It is the discovery of self and its ruin, and the discovery of God and His remedy. It is condemning myself and justifying God. It is finding out the emptiness of self, and finding out the fulness of Christ. It is learning the force and application of those few

words, "Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."

And see how all this comes out in the brief but comprehensive record of the thief. No sooner does he give expression to the sense of his own just condemnation, than he turns to that Blessed One who was hanging beside him, and bears the sweet testimony, "This man hath done nothing amiss." Here he gives a flat contradiction to the whole world. He joins issue with the chief priests, elders and scribes who had delivered up the Holy One as a malefactor. They had declared, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." But the dying thief declares "This man hath done nothing amiss." Thus he stands forth in clear and decided testimony to the spotless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ—that grand truth which lies at the very base of, "The great mystery of godliness." He turns from a guilty self to a spotless Christ; and he tells the world that it had made a terrible mistake in crucifying the Lord of glory.

And was not this a good work? Yes, truly, the very best work that any one could do. To bear a full, clear, bold testimony to Christ, is the most acceptable and fragrant service that any mortal can render to God. Millions bestowed in charity—continents traversed in the interests of philanthropy—a lifetime spent in the dreary exercises of mechanical religiousness—all these things put together are as the small dust of the balance when compared with one word of heart-felt, genuine, Spirit-taught testimony to God's beloved Son. The poor thief could do nothing and give nothing; but oh! he was permitted to enjoy the rich-

est and rarest privilege that could possibly fall to the lot of any mortal, even the privilege of bearing witness to Christ, when the whole world had cast Him out—when one of His own disciples had denied Him—another had sold Him—and all had forsaken Him. This, indeed, was service, this was work—a service and a work which shall live in the records and the memory of heaven when the proudest monuments of human genius and benevolence shall have crumbled and sunk in eternal oblivion.

But we have some further lessons to learn from the lips of the dying malefactor. Not only does he bear a bright and blessed testimony to the spotless humanity of Christ; but he also owns Him as Lord and King, and this, too, at a moment, and amid a scene when, to nature's view, there was not a single trace of lordship or royalty. "He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Reader, think of this! Think of one who had, as it were, a moment before, been railing on the dying Saviour, now owning Him as Lord and King! Truly this was divine work. Surely this was real conversion —a true turning to God. "Lord, remember *me*." Oh! how unspeakably precious is this golden chain with its three links! How lovely to see a poor worthless, guilty, hell-deserving "*me*" linked on to the divine Saviour, by that one word, "*remember!*"

This was life eternal. A Saviour and a sinner linked together, is everlasting salvation. Nothing can be simpler. People may talk of works, of feelings, of experiences; but here we have the matter presented in its divine simplicity, and in its divine order. We have

first the fruit of a genuine repentance, in the words, "we indeed justly;" and then the sweet result of spiritual conversion in the one simple but powerful utterance "Lord, remember me." "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Repent and turn to God."

What marvellous depth and power in those words! To repent is to see the utter ruin of self. To turn to God, is life and peace, and everlasting salvation. We discover self and we loathe and abhor it. We discover God and turn to Him with the whole heart, and find in Him all we want for time and for eternity. It is all divinely simple and unspeakably blessed. Repentance and conversion are inseparably linked together. They are distinct yet intimately connected. They must neither be separated nor confounded.

And, now, let us note the divine response to the appeal of the penitent thief. He had said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." What is the answer? "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." It is as though the blessed Saviour had said to him, "You need not wait for the *glory* of the *kingdom*; this very day thou shalt taste the *grace* of the *house*—the love of my Father's home above; I shall have you with me in that bright paradise, to enjoy full communion with me long before the glories of the kingdom shall be unfolded." Most blessed Saviour! Such was Thy matchless grace!

And not one reproving word! Not a single reference to the past! Not even a glance at the recent heartless wickedness! Ah! no; there is never aught of this in the divine dealing with a penitent soul. The

thief had said—said from the depths of a broken and contrite heart, "we indeed justly." This was enough. True, it was needful; but it was enough. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." No; and not only will He not despise it, but He will pour into it the rich and precious consolation of His grace and pardoning love. It is the joy of God to pardon a penitent sinner; and none but a penitent sinner can truly enjoy the pardon of God.

"*To-day* shalt *thou* be *with me* in paradise. Here the glories of a present, personal, and perfect salvation pour themselves in divine lustre, upon the gaze of the astonished thief.

And, be it noted, that there is not one syllable about doing, or giving, or feeling, or aught else that might turn the eye in upon self. The eye had been turned in, and rightly so; and it had seen nothing but a deep, dark abyss of guilt and ruin. This was enough. The eye must henceforth and for evermore be turned outward and upward; it must be fixed on the precious Saviour who was bringing him to paradise, and on that bright paradise to which He was bringing him.

No doubt the thief could never forget what a sinner he had been—never forget his guilt and wickedness—never could he, never shall he; yea, throughout the countless ages of eternity, he and all the redeemed shall remember the past. How could it be otherwise? Shall we lose the power of memory in the future? Surely not. But every remembrance of the past shall only tend to swell the note of praise which the heart shall give forth as we think of the grace that shines in those most precious words, "Their sins and their

iniquities I will remember no more." Such is the style of divine forgiveness! God will never again refer to those sins which His own loving hand has cancelled by the blood of the cross. Never. No, never. He has cast them behind His back for ever. They have sunk as lead into the deep, unfathomable waters of His eternal forgetfulness. All praise to His glorious Name!

But we must now fix the eye, for a brief moment, upon the third cross. On it we behold—what? A guilty sinner? Not merely that. The penitent thief was that. They were in the same condemnation. No one need go to hell simply because he is a sinner, inasmuch as Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners "even the chief." There is not a sinner, this day, outside the precincts of hell, who is not within the reach of God's salvation if he only feel his need of it. No one need be lost, merely because he is a ruined, guilty, hell-deserving sinner.

But what do we behold on that third cross? We behold an *unbelieving* sinner. This is the solemn point. We may, without any hesitation, declare that had the occupant of that cross, like his penitent companion, cast himself upon the grace of the dying Saviour, he would, most assuredly, have met with the same response. There was grace in the heart of Jesus to meet the one as well as the other. But he did not want it, would not have it. He remained impenitent and unbelieving until the dark shadows of death gathered round him, and the darker horrors of hell burst upon his guilty soul. He perished within arm's length of the Saviour.

Tremendous thought! what finite mind can take it in? Who can fully estimate the contrast between those two men? True, the contrast was in one point; but that one point involved consequences of eternal moment. What was it! It was this—the reception or rejection of the Son of God—believing or not believing on that blessed One who was hanging between them—as near to the one as He was to the other. There was no difference in their nature; no difference in their condition; no difference in their circumstances. The grand and all important difference lay in this, that one believed in Jesus, and the other did not; one was enabled to say, "Lord, remember me;" the other said, "If thou be the Christ."

What a contrast! What a broad line of demarcation! What an awful chasm between two men so like in other respects—so near to one another—so near to the Divine Saviour! But it is just the same in all cases, everywhere, and at all times. The one simple but solemn question for each and for all is this, "What is my relation to Christ?" All hinges upon this—yes, all for time and eternity. Am I in Christ? or am I not?

The two thieves represent the two great classes into which mankind has been divided, from the days of Cain and Abel down to this very moment. God's Christ is the one great and all deciding test, in every case. All the shades of moral character—all the grades of social life—all the castes, classes, sects and parties into which the human family has been, is, or ever shall be divided—all are absorbed in this one momentous point—"*In or out of Christ.*" The difference between the two

thieves is just the difference between the saved and the lost—the church and the world—the children of God and the children of God's great enemy. True it is that in the case of the two thieves the matter is brought to a point so that we can see it at a glance; but it is the same in every case. The Person of Christ is the one great boundary line that marks off the new creation from the old—the kingdom of God from the kingdom of Satan—the children of light from the children of darkness, and this boundary line stretches away into eternity.

Reader, what sayest thou to these things? On which side of this line art thou, at this moment, standing? Art thou, like the penitent thief, linked on to Christ by a simple faith? Or dost thou, like his impenitent companion, speak of Christ with an "if?" Say, dear friend, how is it? Do not put this question away from thee. Take it up and look it solemnly in the face. Your eternal weal or woe hangs on your answer to this question. Oh, do, we beseech of thee, think of it now! Turn to Jesus now! Come now! God commands thee! Delay not! Reason not! Come just as thou art to Jesus who hung on that centre cross for us.

"JUST AS I AM."

THE moment a sinner takes his true place, as one thoroughly lost, guilty and undone—as one who is so bad, that he cannot, possibly, be worse, there is an immediate, a divine settlement of the entire question of sin. The grace of God deals with sinners; and when I know myself to be a sinner, I know myself to

be one whom Christ came to save. The more clearly any one can prove me to be a sinner, the more clearly he establishes my title to the love of God, and the work of Christ. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) Now, if I am "unjust," I am one of those very people for whom Christ died, and I am entitled to all the benefits of His death. "There is not a just man upon earth;" and, inasmuch as I am "upon earth," it is plain I am "unjust;" and it is equally plain that Christ died for me—that He suffered for my sins. Since, therefore, Christ died for me, it is my happy privilege to enter into the immediate enjoyment of the fruits of His sacrifice. This is as plain as plainness itself. It demands no effort whatsoever. I am not called to be anything but just what I am. I am not called to feel, to experience, to realize anything. The word of God assures me that Christ died for me just as I am; and if He died for me I am as safe as He is Himself. There is nothing against me. Christ met all. He not only suffered for my "*sins*," but He "made an end of *sin*." He abolished the entire system in which, as a child of the first Adam, I stood, and He has introduced me into a new position, in association with Himself, and there I stand, before God, free from all charge of sin, and all fear of judgment.

Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

AUTHORITY AND POWER.

If ever there was a moment, in the history of the professing church, in which it behoved people to have divine authority for their path, and divine power to pursue it, this is the moment. There are so many conflicting opinions, so many jarring voices, so many opposing schools, so many contending parties, that we are in danger, at all points, of losing our balance and being carried we know not whither. We find the very best of men ranged on opposite sides of the same question—men who, so far as we can judge, seem to have a single eye to the glory of Christ, and to take the word of God as their sole authority in all things.

What, then, is a simple soul to do? How is one to get on, in the face of all this? Is there no peaceful haven in the which to anchor one's tiny barque, away from the wild tossing of the stormy ocean of human opinion? Yes, blessed be God there is; and the reader may know the deep blessedness of casting anchor there this very moment. It is the sweet privilege of the very simplest child of God, the merest babe in Christ, to have divine authority for his path and divine power to pursue it—authority for his position, and power to occupy it—authority for his work, and power to do it.

What is it! Where is it! The authority is found in *the divine word*; the power is found in *the divine presence*. Thus it is, blessed be God; and each and all may know it—ought to know it, for the stability of their path and the joy of their heart.

In contemplating the present condition of professing

christians generally, one is struck with this very painful fact, that so few, so very few, are prepared to face scripture, on all points and in all matters, personal, domestic, commercial and ecclesiastical. If the question of the soul's salvation be settled—and alas! how rarely it is settled—then, verily, people consider themselves at liberty to break away from the sacred domain of scripture, and launch forth upon the wild watery waste of human opinion and human will, where each one may think for himself, and choose for himself, and act for himself.

Now, nothing is more certain than this, that, where it is merely a question of human opinion, human will, or human judgment, there is not a shadow of authority —not a particle of power. No human opinion has any authority over the conscience; nor can it impart any power to the soul. It may go for what it is worth; but it has neither authority nor power for me. I must have God's word and God's presence, else I cannot get on. If aught, no matter what, comes in between my conscience and the word of God, I know not where I am, what to do, or whither to turn. And if aught, no matter what, comes in between my heart and the presence of God, I am perfectly powerless. The word of my Lord is my *only* directory; His dwelling in me and with me, my *only* power. "Have not I commanded thee? Lo, I am with thee."

But, it may be the reader feels disposed to enquire, "Is it really true that the word of God contains ample guidance for all the details of life? Does it tell me, for instance, where I am to go on Lord's day; and what I am to do from Monday morning till Saturday

night? Does it direct me in my personal path; in my domestic relationships; in my commercial position; in my religious associations and opinions?"

Most assuredly. The word of God furnishes you thoroughly to all good works, and any work for which it does not furnish you is not good but bad. Hence, if you cannot find authority for where you go on Lord's day—no matter where it is—you must, at once, give up going. And if you cannot find authority for what you do on Monday, you must, at once, cease to do it. "To obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams." Let us honestly face scripture. Let us bow down to its holy authority in all things. Let us humbly and reverently yield ourselves to its heavenly guidance. Let us give up every habit, every practice, every association, be it what it may, or be it sanctioned by whom it may, for which we have not the direct authority of God's word, and in which we cannot enjoy the sense of *His presence—the life of His appreciating countenance.*

This is a point of the very gravest moment. Indeed it would be impossible for human language to set forth with due force or in adequate terms, the vast importance of absolute and complete submission to the authority of scripture in all things—yes, we would say, and with emphasis—*all things.*

One of our greatest practical difficulties, in dealing with souls, arises from the fact that they do not seem to have any idea of submitting in all things to scripture. They will not face the word of God, or consent to be taught exclusively from its sacred pages. Creeds and confessions; religious formularies; the commandments, the doctrines, and the traditions of men—these things

will be heard and yielded to. Our own will, our own judgment, our own views of things will be allowed to bear sway. Expediency, position, reputation, personal influence; usefulness; the opinion of friends; the thoughts and example of good and great men; the fear of grieving or giving offence to those whom we love and esteem, and with whom we may have been long associated in our religious life and service; the dread of being thought presumptuous; intense shrinking from the appearance of judging or condemning many at whose feet we would willingly sit—all these things operate and exert a most pernicious influence upon the soul, and hinder full surrender of ourselves to the paramount authority of God's word.

May the Lord graciously stir up our hearts in reference to this weighty subject! May He lead us, by His Holy Spirit, to see the true place and the real value and power of His word! May that word be set up in our souls as the one all-sufficient rule, so that everything—no matter what—may be unhesitatingly and utterly rejected that is not based upon its authority. Then we may expect to make progress. Then shall our path be as the path of the just, like a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. May we never rest satisfied until, in reference to all our habits, all our ways, all our associations, our religious position and service, all we do and all we do not do; where we go and where we do not go, we can truly say we have the sanction of God's word and the light of His presence. Here, and here alone, lies the deep and precious secret of AUTHORITY AND POWER.

THE DIVINE ANATHEMA.

1 Cor. xvi. 22.

It is difficult to speak or write without deep feeling when dwelling on that awful word, and with so many on every side who are utterly careless as to its dread reality. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha"—accursed of the Lord at His coming. But is this, some may ask, its plain and true meaning? Most assuredly it is. Nothing could be plainer, more definite or absolute. The curse of God is the eternal doom of all who love not the Saviour of mankind—His well-beloved Son. "*If any man,*" is surely most comprehensive; any man, no matter who he is, what he is, where he is, how he reasons, what excuses he may offer: the word of God is positive, it has gone forth from His throne, it is unalterable, it is fixed as the foundation of that throne, changeless as His own being—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"—Anathematized when the Lord shall come.

Do you think, dear reader, this judgment severe? It may appear so at first sight, or to a thoughtless reader; but a moment's reflection will convince you that it is not only just, but necessary in the righteous government of God. He loves His Son, knows what He has done and suffered for mankind, and fairly estimates His claims on their grateful love. All this He has revealed to us; we know His mind. And how sweetly He has pressed His love upon us, with every blessing that love can give, and the bearer to us of all these blessings is the

Son of His own bosom whom He spared not, "but delivered him up for us all." But, surely, if we are careless about all these things, and despise the bearer of heaven's richest favours, what will the throne of judgment say? Is there no crime in despising both the love and the authority of God; in disregarding His demands for the honour of His Son? Are His rights not to be vindicated, or the claims of His Son maintained? Rest assured my fellow sinner, that so just, so holy, so righteous, will the judgment of God be, that the vast universe will resound with a solemn Amen, as the curse of God is pronounced on those who have hated in place of loved the Lord Jesus. Heaven will willingly own it; the faithful on earth will re-echo heaven's universal Amen; the condemned must own it, and hell too must groan out reluctantly its Amen, and acknowledge that God is holy and just and good, and that the man who is accursed has only lost what he despised, and is now in the place which he chose for himself.

But, pray, my dear reader, ere it be too late, and ere this year also close upon thy unsaved soul, come a little nearer, and let us examine more closely, the claims of Him whom God would have thee love. Is He fairly entitled to the homage of thy heart and the willing, happy obedience of thy life! Surely, oh, most surely He is, and He only!

To love the Lord is to believe in Him; and the more we meditate on His love to us, and what He has gone through for us, the more will our faith expand, and rise into the most admiring, adoring, grateful love. But we must know Him to believe in Him, and know Him in the fullest expression of His love to us. Blessed

Lord! He invites us to come to Him, to be drawn to Him by the attractions of His cross, and the glory of His Person. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." (John xii. 32, 33.) Never was God's love to thee a sinner, and God's hatred of thy sin, so fully manifested as in the cross of His dear Son; and never did His love to the lost and helpless soul shine so brightly. Here thou wilt do well to pause for a moment and dwell on this wondrous sight, this twofold aspect of the cross. When, or how could God's hatred of sin be so manifested as when He punished it in the Person of His own beloved Son? The thought is overwhelming! But it must for ever justify God in punishing sin in the person of the impenitent sinner himself. The cross will stand for ever as the declaration of God's righteousness in the judgment of sin, and in pardoning the chief of sinners, who believe in Jesus. But also, look at the greatness of God's love to the sinner in the sufferings and death of Jesus. Every drop of that precious blood which was shed on Calvary, proclaims to heaven, earth and hell, God's love to the lost and ruined sinner.

But sin must be put away according to the claims of God's glory, that His love may flow forth freely, and the full blessing come to us. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Jesus, in the greatness of His love, bore the punishment in our stead. He was nailed to the accursed tree, that the Anathemas of God might never fall on us and sink our souls in hell for ever. In love, He endured the cross, and there was nothing that His love did not willingly endure that God

might be glorified and the sinner saved. But who can speak of the judgment of God against sin! That which man is disposed to make light of; that which thou hast made light of these many years. The waves and billows of divine wrath rolled over His sinless, spotless soul; His brow was wreathed with a crown of thorns, emblem of the curse of sin; He was forsaken of God; He tasted the bitterness of death. God hid His face from Him, when bearing our sin; but at length the cup was drained, and the shout of victory was heard, "*It is finished.*" All was now done; every claim of heaven, and every need of the sinner fully met; sin and guilt were put away; the word of God maintained inviolate, and His name glorified. But again we say; again we press upon thy attention the awful thought—the judgment due to sin. And as the Lord Himself says, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

But tell me, O my friend, tell me, before I close, Hast thou been in any measure drawn to Jesus by His wondrous love in dying on the cross, in dying for thee? —In dying that thou mightest be drawn to Him in faith and love, and delivered from the awful judgment due to thy sins? But is His love less to-day than it was the day on which He died? Surely not! His love is the same; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He waits to be gracious now, He loves to bless now, He delights to save now, He rejoices over every returning sinner now, He is ready to receive every repenting, returning prodigal now. Flee then, my friend, oh, flee to His open, His outstretched arms. No Anathemas are there. All is love; and such love! The folded

arms, the fond embrace, the robe, the ring, the fatted calf, the joyous welcome of heaven's myriad hosts; all await thy coming. Thou knowest the invitation and the promise, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Believe His word—His loving word to worn and weary hearts —Come! Believe His promise true, Come! The love that suffered for sinners ready to perish, bids thee, Come!

What so fitted to melt thy heart, to win thy confidence, as a Saviour's love! Despise not this love, I entreat thee, or, what must the end be? Thou wilt surely find that thou hast not been frightened with vain fears; the Anathemas of indignant justice will far exceed in their terrible thunders the most vivid descriptions of either preacher or writer. And thou shalt also find in that awful day of retribution, that this sore judgment is not for thy common sins merely, but for the great—the aggravated sin, of rejecting a Saviour's love. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha," are the just and unalterable words of heaven.

Once more, my friend, for I tremble to leave thee, lest thou art still preferring the favour of the world to the love of Christ. Pharaoh hardened his heart against the judgment of God, but what must be the guilt of him who hardens his heart against the love of Jesus! Bow, then, O lost one, bow, bow at Jesus' feet. Salvation, full, free, and everlasting is there; peace with God is there, the eternal glories of heaven are there: delay not then, I beseech thee; years roll on; the end draws

near; divine love has sent forth another and another messenger of peace to thee; but the last will soon be here; the dreadful day of recompense lingers not; the gathering storm of divine wrath can only be averted by the sheltering blood of the slain Lamb. Flee then, to that refuge, flee; it is thy only covert from the storm, thy only hiding place from the sweeping tempest of coming wrath. But flee now—just now—lest thou shouldst be overtaken suddenly and swept into the lake of fire. Before turning thy thoughts to anything else, turn to the Lord; speak to Him; confess thy sins to Him; have faith in His love, and in His precious blood which cleanseth from all sin. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

May the Lord give to thee, my dear reader, and to every unsaved reader of "Things New and Old," thus to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ before this year closes; and we can promise you a truly, a divinely, happy New Year, should we still be here in the long-suffering of our blessed Lord.

JOHN IV. 6—26.

He hath come from far, that weary One
Who sits by the lone well-side;
And tired and faint, 'neath the Eastern sun,
He rests in the fierce noontide.

O cool are the waters far below,
And thirsting is He to drink;
But a greater thirst His heart doth know,
As He sitteth on the brink.

And known to Him ere it meets His ear,
The tread of those coming feet;
An erring one to the well draws near,
Whom His heart goes forth to meet.

Goes forth with love and with healing grace,
For He knoweth all her need:
With a careless glance she scans His face,
But His heart she cannot read.

And yet those miles He has travell'd o'er,
And has waited for her there;
Has thirsted that she might thirst no more,
But unfailing waters share!

And oh, He knoweth, He knoweth well,
The price which Himself must pay;
Her tears to wipe and her fears to quell,
And her sins to take away.

To clothe her soul in the garments white,
That washed in His blood must be;
And His mind foresees—O wondrous sight!
His cross! and His agony!

The holy God and the sinner met!
What marvellous grace is here!
She hears His voice, but she knows not yet
Herself to her God so near.

So far in sin, but so near in grace,
So near to the heart of love!
O erring child of Samarian race,
Rest here like a weary dove.

He tells of a fountain clear and deep,
That she needs not seek afar;
Of the still, sure waters, where His sheep
So tenderly sheltered are.

He tells her of joy beyond her ken,
And He shews her who He is;
"His delights were with the sons of men,"
Whom He came to fill with bliss.

O happy moments for Him, for her!
She the joyful tidings bears;
He sits regardless of hunger there,
For His Father's joy He shares,

That another lost one has been found;
And to do His Father's will
Is His meat and drink—He looks around
For some other heart to fill.

'Twas thus from His chosen work of grace
He was never turned aside;
And His human wants could find no place,
Until love was satisfied.

O God, our Father! in Christ Thy Son
Is Thy "perfect love" revealed!
And well may our hearts rejoice, each one
By Thy Holy Spirit sealed.

Of love so high, unto depths so low,
Stooping in grace to shine—
Not men, nor angels, nor God doth know
Of a love, O God, like Thine!

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